The Believer's Provision Series (8)

Fasting Is Protection

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Chapter 5

Foreword

Praise be to Allah. I testify that there is no God but Allah, and I testify that Mohammad is His slave and Messenger.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Prophet Mohammad and upon his kin, his companions and his followers.

I have read this valuable treatise, *Fasting Is Protection*, by Dr. Khaled Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Jeraisy - may Allah grant him success. The content is well selected and comprehensive. It covers fasting in terms of its history, aims, requirements, types, nullifiers and related acts of worship, such as voluntary night prayers, observing Lailat Al-Qadr (the Night of Power / Decree) and *zakaatul-fitr (zakaah* for completing the fast of Ramadan). The selected material, including Hadiths, is well documented.

The book is greatly beneficial. May Allah

reward the author greatly and bless his efforts.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His Prophet Mohammad and upon his kin, his companions and his followers.

Abdullah Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Jibreen

25/10/1425 H

Introduction

Praise be to Allah . I testify that there is no God but Allah, and I testify that Mohammad is His slave and Messenger.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His Prophet Mohammad and upon his kin, his companions and his followers.

Thanks be to Allah for the blessings and rewards of fasting.

This book provides a comprehensive survey of fasting. It includes the virtues, major issues and rules of fasting. I hope it will benefit fellow Muslims.

The title of the book is derived from this Hadith: "Fasting is for me," says Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)*, "and I give reward accordingly, for man gives up

* (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) is pronounced /'azza wa jalla/, which Muslims say to praise Allah. It means "May He be exalted and glorified".

sex, food and drink for My Sake. Fasting is protection. Whoever fasts rejoices twice, the first time on breaking the fast, and the second on meeting the Lord. "The smell of the mouth of the fasting person is considered by Allah to be better than the fragrance of musk."(1)

The book has five chapters:

Chapter 1: Statements from the Qur'an Prescribing Fasting
Chapter 2: Fasting: Definition & Prescription
Chapter 3: Virtues of Fasting and Traits of Ramadan
Chapter 4: Types of Fasting
Chapter 5: Fasting Requirements & Issues

May Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) accept this work, make it beneficial to fellow Muslims and reward me for it.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His Prophet Mohammad and upon his kin, his companions and his followers.

Chapter 1

Statements from the Qur'an Prescribing Fasting

The following statements, from the Qur'an, embody the basics of fasting. As usual, the Sunnah details and illustrates the Qur'anic general or basic statements. So, related Hadiths on fasting details and illustrations will be mentioned whenever necessary.

1. Surat Al-Baqarah / Ayahs 183-187

"(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may observe *taqwa*); (184) (Fast) a certain number of days; and (for) him who is sick among you, or on a journey, (the same) number of other days; and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need. But whoso does good of his own accord, it is better for him: and that you fast is better for you if

you did but know. (185) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you; and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure you may be thankful. (186) And when My servants question you concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he cries unto Me. So let them bear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright. (187) It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and you are raiment for them. Allah is aware that you were deceiving yourselves in this respect and He has turned in

mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expounds His revelations to mankind that they may observe *taqwa*."

2. Surat Al-Baqarah / Ayah 196

"(196) Perform the pilgrimage and the visit (to Mecca) for Allah. And if you are prevented, then send such gifts as can be obtained with ease, and shave not your heads until the gifts have reached their destination. And whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head must pay a ransom of fasting or alms giving or offering. And if you are in safety, then whosoever contents himself with the Visit for the Pilgrimage (shall give) such

gifts as can be had with ease. And whosoever cannot find (such gifts) then a fast of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when you have returned; that is, ten in all. That is for him whose folk are not present at the Inviolable Place of Worship. Observe your duty to Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment."

3. Surat Al-Nissaa'/Ayah 92

"(92) It is not for a believer to kill a believer unless (it be) by mistake. He who has killed a believer by mistake must set free a believing slave, and pay the blood money to the family of the slain, unless they remit it as a charity. If he (the victim) be of a people hostile unto you, and he is a believer, then (the penance is) to set free a believing slave. And if he comes of a folk between whom and you there is a covenant, then the blood money must be paid unto his folk and (also) a believing slave must be set free. And whoso has not the wherewithal must fast two

consecutive months. A penance from Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise."

4. Surat Al-Maa’idah / Ayah 89

"(89) Allah will not take you to task for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the oaths which you swear in earnest. The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten of the needy with the average of that wherewith you feed your own folk, or the clothing of them, or the liberation of a slave, and for him who finds not (the wherewithal to do so) then a three-day fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when you have sworn; and keep your oaths. Thus Allah expounds unto you His revelations in order that you may give thanks."

5. Surat Al-Maa’idah / Ayah 95

"(95) O you who believe! Kill no wild game while you are on the pilgrimage. Whoso of you kills it of set purpose he shall pay its forfeit in the

equivalent of that which he has killed, of domestic animals, the judge to be two men among you known for justice; (the forfeit) to be brought as an offering to the Ka'bah; or, for expiation, he shall feed poor persons, or the equivalent thereof in fasting, that he may taste the evil consequences of his deed. Allah forgives whatever (of this kind) may have happened in the past, but whoso relapses, Allah will take retribution from him. Allah is Mighty, Able to Requite (the wrong)."

6. Surat Al-Mujaadilah / Ayahs 3-4

"(3) Those who put away their wives (by saying they are as their mothers) and afterward would go back on that which they have said; (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. Unto this you are exhorted; and Allah is informed of what you do. (4) And he who finds not (the wherewithal), let him fast for two successive months before they touch one another; and for him who is unable to do so (the

penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones. This, that you may put trust in Allah and His messenger. Such are the limits (imposed by Allah); and for disbelievers is a painful doom."

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Chapter 2

Fasting: Definition & Prescription

Definition

Sawm in General

In general, the term *sawm* (fasting) basically refers to deliberate stoppage of an act, verbal or non-verbal. It includes stoppage of movement, e.g. of water, wind and animals. For example, the term *sawm* may refer to stoppage of speaking, as in this Qur'anic verse, where Maryam, the Mother of Jesus, was instructed to say, "(26) So eat and drink and be consoled. And if you meet any mortal, say: Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any mortal." [19/26] The phrase "a fast" refers to "not speaking". Fasting also includes the common meaning of stoppage of such activities as eating and drinking, and hence using the word "saa'im"

to describe the person that stops eating, drinking and sexual intercourse.[2]

Sawm in Shari’ah

In the Shari’ah literature, the definitions of *sawm* can be summed up as "abstention from particular things that cause the break of fast".[3]This definition can be detailed as follows:

- Fasting is required of the accountable Muslim (who is an adult, is in a sane state of mind and is aware of *sawm* as an Islamic obligation).
- The Muslim must be able to bear it.
- It is required of those who are not eligible for license to break their fast, due to, for example, travel or illness.
- The intention to fast is necessary.
- The Muslim has to abstain from all nullifiers of fasting, such as eating, drinking, sexual intercourse and deliberate vomiting.
- The abstention lasts from dawn to sunset.

As for the word "Ramadan", it is derived from the word *ramdh*, meaning "burning", as sins are burned during the fasting month. It is also said to be derived from *ramadh*, meaning "thirst".(4)

Sawm Prescription: History

As an act of worship, *sawm* was prescribed for the People of the Book earlier. In this regard, Allah (ﷻ) says, "(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may exercise *taqwa*." [2/183] *Sawm* reached its perfect form in Allah's last message of Islam. Four stages of *sawm* prescription can be identified:

First Stage

The Prophet (ﷺ) first instructed the Muslims to fast during three days of each lunar month as well as the tenth of Al-Muharram (the 1st month

(*) (ﷺ) is a prayer Muslims say when Prophet Mohammad is mentioned. It is pronounced / Salla allaahu 'alaihi wa sallam/, and it means "May Allah's prayers and peace be upon him".

of the Arabic calendar). This is called the 'Aashuuraa' Day, and those are called "the 3 white days". According to one Hadith, "The Messenger of Allah would instruct and encourage us [Muslims] to fast during the 'Aashuuraa' Day and would remind us to do so. However, when the month of Ramadan was designated for *sawm*, he did not instruct or forbid us, nor did he remind us (of the 'Ashuuraa' Day)." (5)

According to another Hadith, "Allah's Messenger used to fast three days in each month, to fast the 'Aashuraa' Day till Allah revealed the Ayah: "(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may exercise *taqwa*." [2/183] Since then, whoever wanted to fast did so, and whoever wanted not to fast had to give a meal to one needy person for each day instead.(6)

A Related Question

Which days of the lunar month are the 3 "white days"?

Answer

Muslim scholars agree that it is a *sunnah* to fast during three days of each lunar month. Al-Jumhuur (scholars of the Hanafi, the Shaafi'i and the Hanbali schools of thought) recommend the fast of the 3 "white days". These are the 13th, 14th and 15[7] These are described as "white" because of the moon's distinct fullness and brightness. The following support the recommendation. According to the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ), addressing Abu Dharr, said, "O Abu Dharr, if you intend to fast during 3 days every month, let them be the 13th, 14th and 15th."[8] In addition, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* has a chapter titled "Fasting the Three White Days: the 13th, 14th and 15th".

However, fasting during any three days of the month is valid and rewardable, by Allah 's Grace. It is the fasting that matters, but not those particular days. According to one Hadith, Abu Hurairah said, "My dear friend [Prophet

Mohammad (ﷺ)] advised me to fast during three days of every month, to perform the Dhuhaa prayer and to perform the Witr prayer before going to bed at night."[9] This Hadith does not specify any particular days.

Second Stage

In this stage, fasting during the month of Ramadan became obligatory, as mentioned in these verses: "(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may exercise *taqwa*. [2/183] As a result, the fasting of the 'Aashuuraa' Day became voluntary."[10]In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The 'Aashuuraa' Day is one of Allah 's days. You may fast the day if you wish, or you may not fast the day if you wish."[11]

Third Stage

The third stage was characterized by the license not to fast during the month of Ramadan in return for a ransom. An able

Muslim had the option not to fast, but had to feed a needy person for each day instead. As mentioned in the Qur'an, "... [For] those who can afford it, there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need....." [2/184]

Fourth Stage

The fourth stage retracted the license given in the third stage. Able Muslims had to fast, and the option not to fast in return for a ransom stopped. The new command was: "(185).... And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, Thus, this Ayah abrogated the command in Ayah No. 2/184.(12)

However, the license not to fast in Ramadan remained for two specific cases: the case of illness that can be complicated or prolonged by fasting or that can make fasting unbearable; and the case of traveling during the day. In return, the Muslim who takes the license in these two cases has to fast

the same number of missed days later, once the reason for license is over. As stated in the Qur'an, ".... [And] whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. ..." [2/185]

Thus, Muslims are commanded to fast the whole month of Ramadan, while there is license not to fast in the cases of illness and travel and to fast the missed days later. Shari'ah is meant for the good and ease of man. Allah (ﷻ) says, ".... Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you; and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure you may be thankful." [2/185].

Changes in the Fasting Format

Fasting went through various developments in accordance with human nature and evolving conditions of earlier Muslims. In its final format, fasting meant abstaining from certain things

desigrated as *muftiraat* (things that cause the break of fast) from dawn to sunset.

When fasting was first prescribed, eating, drinking and intercourse were conditional in the period from sunset to dawn. To eat, drink or have intercourse, one had to stay awake during the night in question. In other words, if one slept anytime from sunset to dawn, one was not allowed to do any of these things during the rest of the night, but had to wait till the sunset of the following day to break his fast as usual. Also, once one performed the Ishaa prayer, one was not allowed to eat, drink or have intercourse during the rest of the night.

The two conditions were later lifted by Qur'anic Revelations. As a result, Muslims were allowed to eat, drink and have intercourse from sunset to dawn. This has been the fasting format ever since.

For documentation of the changes in format, the

reader may wish to consult the Hadiths narrated by Al-Baraa' Ibn Aazib(13), Kaab Ibn Maalik,(14) Al-Baraa' Ibn Aazib(15) and Ibn Abbaas. (16)(17)

Related Question

In Ayah 2, Surat Al-Baqarah, Muslims are licensed to "... eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct... from the black thread of the dawn..."? What do the words "white thread" and "black thread" refer to? Answering the question, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "It is the blackness of night and the whiteness of day"(18) For further explanations, the reader may wish to consult related Hadiths.(19)(20)

The command and the way to fast, as we do now, were finally settled in Sha'baan (the 8th month of the Muslim calendar) in the 2nd year after Hijrah. The Prophet (ﷺ) did his fast accordingly for 9 years.

Though Muslims have to fast the whole month of Ramadan, as a basic act of worship, the

Prophet (ﷺ) recommends the fast of 'Aashuuraa' on a voluntary basis. In one Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "This is the 'Aashuuraa' day. Allah does not oblige you to fast this day. You may fast if you wish, or you may not fast if you wish."[21] In a similar Hadith, he says, "The 'Aashuuraa' Day is one of Allah's days. You may fast if you wish, or you may not fast if you wish."[22] In fact, he said he was going to fast it in addition to the day before it the following year[23], but it was not to happen because the Prophet (ﷺ) died before the return of the day.[24]

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Chapter 3

Virtues of Fasting and Traits of Ramadan

Fasting has a great number of virtues, by the Grace of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). The following are some of them.

1. Fasting the month of Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam. It is a sign of one's faith to affirm belief in fasting as an obligation for all Muslims. According to the Hadith, Islam is built on five pillars: bearing witness that there is no God but Allah, and Mohamed is the Messenger of Allah; establishing prayers; paying zakaah; fasting the whole month of Ramadan; and doing *hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah)."(25)

2. Fasting the days of Ramadan with the intention to please Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) alone and seek reward from Him is a sign of pure faith, which qualifies one for forgiveness of sins. Prophet

Mohammad (ﷺ) says, "If one fasts during the month of Ramadan, intending to affirm faith in Allah, to please Him and to seek reward from Him, one's previous sins will be forgiven."(26)

Similarly, doing voluntary acts of worship of Allah (عز وجل) during the nights of Ramadan is a sign of pure faith and qualifies one for rewards from Allah (عز وجل). Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) says, "If one stays up during the nights of Ramadan, worshipping Allah, intending to affirm faith in Allah, to please Him and to seek reward from Him, one's previous sins will be forgiven."(27)

Of the Ramadan nights, Lailat Alqadr (the Night of Power / Decree) is special. As mentioned in the Qur'an, it is better than 1,000 nights. Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) says, "If one stays up the Night of Power /Decree worshipping Allah, intending to affirm faith in Allah, to please Him and to seek reward from Him, one's previous sins will be forgiven."(28)

3. Unlike other acts of worship, fasting, by

nature, is not observable to people, and so it provides for genuinely pure intentions. This may explain why Allah (ﷻ) allocates special rewards for it. According to the Hadith, "All man's good acts are rewarded in multiples, ranging from 10 to 700 folds. As for fasting, Allah says: It is done especially for My Sake, and I will reward it for its special worth; it is for My Sake that man abstains from sex and food!"(29)

4. Fasting provides the Muslim with a strong will to resist whims and Satan's whispering. It is, therefore, a means to safety from eternal torment in the Hereafter. As the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Fasting is protection."(30)

5. Fasting is prescribed to control the sexual urge temporarily, and hence it strengthens chastity. Addressing Muslim youth, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "O Muslim youth, let those who can afford it get married. Marriage helps you cast down your eyes, and it guards you against sexual

sins. As for those who cannot afford it, let them fast; fasting controls the urge."[31]

6. Fasting has disciplinary effects on behavior. For example, it involves abstention from false witness. It also makes the Muslim put up with personal offences. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, 'When fasting, you must not engage in acts of insult or ignorance. If called bad names or offended, one is to say, "I am fasting. I am fasting.'"[32] The Prophet (ﷺ) also says, "If one does not abstain from false witness, Allah sees no benefit in one's abstaining from food and drink."[33]

7. In terms of patience, fasting supersedes other acts of worship. The prophet says, "One half of patience exists in fasting."[34]

8. By fasting, the Muslim can enter paradise through Al-Rayyaan Gate, especially for people who observe the fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Heaven has a gate called Al-Rayyaan, through which none but those who observe the fast go in.

Once they are called in, the gate is closed, not to be opened again."[35]

9. The smell of the Muslim's mouth during the fast is considered by Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) to be better than the fragrance of musk.[36]

10. Those who observe the fast are promised double joy. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The Muslim who observes the fast rejoices twice: on having breakfast; and on meeting Allah having observed the fast."[37]

11. Fasting is an opportune occasion for answerable supplication. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says, "(He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure you may be thankful. (186). And when My servants question you concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he cries unto Me. So let them bear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright." [2/185-186]

In these Ayahs, answering payers follows the mention of fasting. "On breaking the fast, a Muslim has an opportunity of saying a prayer that cannot be turned down."[38]

12. Fasting encourages Muslims to follow the Prophet’s example of behavior, especially in relation to generosity. "The Prophet was the most generous of all. He was especially generous in Ramadan, when (Angel) Gabriel - may peace be unto him - met him."[39]

13. It is a great blessing that Ramadan is the chosen month for fasting. Ramadan is a blessed month with numerous virtues. The following are some of them:

- It is the month of the Qur’an. It was in Ramadan that the Qur’an was first sent down in its entirety from the Preserved Tablet to the Place of Dignity in our worldly heaven on Lailat Al-Qadr (the Night of Power / Decree). It was also on the same blessed Night, in Ramadan, that

Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) started receiving Qur’an revelations, which continued for his twenty-three years of prophethood.(40) In this respect, the Qur’an says:

"(185) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)...."[2/185];
"(3) Lo! We revealed it on a blessed night. Lo! We are ever warning."[44/3];
"(1) Lo! We revealed it on Lailat Al-Qadr. (2) Ah, what will convey unto you what Lailat Al-Qadr is! (3) Lailat Al-Qadr is better than a thousand months." [97/1-3]

- As mentioned above, Ramadan is blessed with the Night of Power. On it, acts of worship are better in value than those done in a thousand months, (over eighty-three years). According to the Hadith, Lailat Al-Qadr is one of the odd-numbered nights of the last 10 days of Ramadan(41).

- Ramadan provides great opportunities for doers of good to be nearer to Allah (ﷻ). During it, the gates of Hell are closed while the gates of Heaven are wide open. Every night, Allah (ﷻ) pardons a lot of people and takes them out of the Hellfire. In Prophet Mohamed's words, "On the first night of Ramadan, the devils and rebellious jinn are confined, the gates of Hell are all closed, while the gates of Heaven are all open. There, an announcement is made: 'O doer of good, come closer. O doer of evil, stay away'. Every Ramadan night, Allah releases some people from the Hellfire."(42)

May Allah (ﷻ) bless us and let us witness this great month, fast its days and worship during its nights, too, for His Sake alone. O Allah, let us remain Muslim forever. O Allah, let us be among the ones You pardon in Ramadan.

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Chapter 4

Types of Fasting

In general, fasting is classified into four grades obligatory; recommended; *makruuh;* and banned.

(1) Obligatory Fasting

In terms of time, obligatory fasting may be specific or non-specific. Specific obligatory fasting has to be done on particular days. The days can be specified by Allah (عزّ وجلّ), as in the case of the month of Ramadan. They may be specified by a Muslim, as in the case of self-pledging to fast on particular days.

As for non-specific fasting, it does not have to be done on particular days, as in the following cases: making-up for days missed in Ramadan; atonement, as for breaking an oath and for violating the ban on hunting during *hajj*.

In terms of sequence, obligatory fasting may be consecutive or non-consecutive. For example, one has to fast 2 consecutive days if atoning for Zihaar. Yet, one does not have to fast consecutive days in such cases as: atoning for shaving / cutting one's hair before reaching the Haraam Mosque, where an offering has to be sacrificed; self-pledging to fast on non-specified days; and making up for days missed in Ramadan. In these cases, it is advisable to fast consecutively so that one can carry out one's obligations as quickly as possible.

(2) Recommended Fasting

Comprising this category is voluntary fasting, recommended by the Sunnah, as in the following cases:

(a) **The Prophet Daawuud style of fasting, in which one fasts on alternate days.** This is considered the best for voluntary fasting. According to the Hadith, "Fast one day, and break fast the

following day. This is how Prophet Daawuud used to fast. It is the best way."[43]

(b) **Fasting the 13th, 14th and 15th days of every lunar month.** As narrated by Abu Hurairah, Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) recommended three activities: "fasting three days every month; performing the Dhuha prayer; and performing the witr prayer before going to bed."[44] A similar Hadith.[45] was narrated by Abu Al-Dardaa'.

(c) **Fasting Mondays and Thursdays on a weekly basis, especially Mondays.** Asked about fasting on Monday, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I was born on a Monday, and I received revelations on a Monday."[46] According to Osaamah Ibn Zaid, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to fast on Mondays and Thursdays; asked about the two days, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Records of People's deeds are checked on Mondays and Thursdays."[47] "I want my deeds to be

checked while I am fasting."(48)

(d) **The Muslim is advised to fast as often as possible during the month of Sha’baan.** As narrated by ’Aisha, the Prophet did the most voluntary fasting in Sha’baan. She said, "I have never seen the Prophet fast as often as he did in the month of Sha’baan."(49)

(e) **The Muslim is advised to fast six days, preferably consecutively, during the month of Shawwaal.** The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If one fasts during Ramadan, then fasts six days in Shawwaal, it is equal (in reward) to fasting a whole year."(50)

(f) **It is advisable to fast the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah, especially the ninth, the Arafah Day.** Fasting this day is considered a means to atonement of minor sins of two years, the one before it and another after. It is also a means to alleviating some major sins and to raising the rank of believers. As mentioned in the

Hadith, "I trust that Allah will reward fasting the Arafah Day by atoning for the sins of the previous year and the following one." (51)

(g) **Fasting during the month of Al-Muharram,** especially the 9th and the 10th, the Aashuuraa' Day, is considered the next best to fasting in Ramadan. Priority is given to the Aashuuraa' Day, yet it is recommended to fast both days. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The best fasting next to that in Ramadan is that which takes place in Al-Muharram."(52) The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed the Muslims to fast the Aashuuraa' Day.(53) He also wanted them to fast the day before it so as to be different from the Jews, but he died before he could do that.(54)

(h) **It is recommended to fast the last day of each month of the Muslim calendar,** except the 30th of Sha'baan if the Ramadan crescent is said to have been sighted. According to the Hadith,

the Prophet (ﷺ) said to one Muslim, "O..., are you going to fast the last day of this month?"[55]

(i) The Muslim may fast a day or more as a means to pleasing Allah (عز وجل). The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "When a Muslim fasts one day for the Sake of Allah, in return, Allah will keep his face away from the Hellfire for a period of seventy years."[56]

(3) ***Makruuh*** **(not recommended) Fasting**

It is classified as *makruuh* (not recommended) to fast on the following days:

(a) Friday solely and deliberately

The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Never fast (voluntarily) on a Friday unless together with a day before or after it."[57]In another Hadith, he says, "Never assign for Friday nights special (voluntary) acts of worship, nor assign special fasting for Friday, unless it falls within your fast days."[58]

(b) Saturday solely and deliberately

The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Do not fast on a Saturday, unless as part of your obligatory fasting. If you had nothing to eat (on a Saturday), you should look for something, even to chew, such as the skin of a vine tree or a branch."(59)

That Saturday is revered by the Jews may explain why it is not recommended to assign it special fasting. The same applies to Sunday, which is revered by Christians. In fact, one is to dissociate oneself from the occasions revered by Jews and Christians, unless as part of one's usual fasting.(60)

(c) The Arafah Day (for pilgrims)

On the Arafah Day, during *hajj*, the Prophet (ﷺ) had a drink of milk and people saw him do so.(61)

When asked about fasting the Arafah Day by pilgrims, Ibn Omar said, "I did *hajj* with the

Prophet, but he did not fast the Arafah Day. I did *hajj* with Abu Bakr, but he did not fast the Arafah Day. I did *hajj* with Omar, but he did not fast the Arafah Day. I did *hajj* with Othman, but he did not fast the Arafah Day. I do not fast it either, nor do I instruct any (pilgrim) to fast or not to fast it."(62)

(d) The Day of Doubt

The "day of doubt" refers to the 30th of Sha'baan. This is a typical confusing scenario where fasting this day is not recommended: the Ramadan crescent is not sighted yet; the sky is clear enough for sighting; there is nothing to block vision either, such as dust; and a claim to sighting the crescent by someone untrustworthy is rejected.

Abu-Haneefah, Ibn Malik, Ibn Hanbal consider it *makruuh* to fast the Day of Doubt, whereas Al-Shafi'iy considers it muharram (forbidden); this seems the stronger view given

the clear ban in the Hadith. However, the four imams consider it ok to fast that day in the following cases: if one is accustomed to fasting on Mondays; if one is making up for a missed day from the Ramadan before; or one is fasting as atonement for something.(63)

The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The month is twenty-nine nights. So, do not fast till you sight the crescent. If it is too blurred to sight it, let the month (of Sha'baan) be complete (30 days)."(64)In another Hadith, he says, "If one fasts the 'doubtful day', one disobeys Abu-Alqaassim (Prophet Mohammad)."(65)

(e) A Day or Two Prior to Ramadan

It is *makruuh* to fast a day or two prior to Ramadan. The rulings on the 'day of doubt' apply to this case. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "One is not to fast a day or two prior to Ramadan unless one is fulfilling a monthly custom."(66)

(f) Days Revered by Kaafirs

It is *makruuh* to fast a sole day that is revered by *kaafirs*, such as a Saturday or a Sunday. The ruling on these two days is already mentioned. The same applies to the Nairuuz and Mahrajaan days(67), two Persian celebrations. The ban on fasting such days is to avoid any association with glorifying them.(68)

(g) Continuous Fasting

To fast two days continuously, without breaking fast, is *makruuh*. According to the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) did continuous fasting in the beginning of one Ramadan. Some Muslims did like him. Having learned about them, he did not approve of what they did. He mentioned that he was not like them in that respect.(69)

(h) Fasting All Days

It is *makruuh* to fast all days, even if excluding the days on which fasting is forbidden, namely the two Eids and the *tashreeq* days (Dhul-Hijjah 11th, 12th and 13th). This style of fasting may

result in weakness, hence undermining duties and obligations as well as earning a living. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "It is not fasting if you fast forever. It is not fasting if you fast forever. It is not fasting if you fast forever."(70) In another Hadith, answering a question about those who fast all days, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He (whoever fasts all days) has neither fasted nor broken fast."(71) This may refer to losing reward for disobeying the Prophet's instructions on the one hand and for not breaking fast when one should.

(4) Prohibited Fasting

Fasting is *muharram* (prohibited) on particular days for their own significance and on other days because of necessity.

(a) Days Banned for Their Own Significance

There are five days on which fasting is prohibited for specific reasons. They are: Eed Al-Fitr (Shawwaal 1st); Eed Al-Adh-haa (Dhul-Hijjah 10); and the Tashreeq Days(72) (Dhul-

Hijjah, 11th, 12th and 13th). The ban on fasting these days is in the following Hadiths:

"The Prophet forbade fasting on two particular days: *yawm alfitr* (Eed Al-Fitr) and *yawm alnahr* (Eed Al-Adh-ha / Sacrifice Day)."(73)

"The Tashreeq Days are days for eating and drinking and for remembering Allah."(74)

"The Arafah Day, the Sacrifice Day and the Tashreeq Days are celebration days for us, the people of Islam. They are days for eating and drinking."(75)

The ban on fasting the Arafah Day as stated in the above-mentioned Hadith applies only to pilgrims, those performing *hajj*. As for those who are not performing *hajj*, they are encouraged to fast on the Arafah Day.

Also, there is a license for the pilgrims who are doing *hajj tamattu'* style (omrah-break-*hajj*) or *qaarin* style (omrah and *hajj* combined), but

cannot afford to offer a sacrifice. In this case, a pilgrim is permitted to fast during the Tashreeq Days as atonement. According to the Hadith, "No Fasting was allowed during the Tashreeq days unless one could not afford a sacrifice."(76)In another Hadith, "Fasting is for those who are doing *hajj tamattu'* style. If unable to offer a sacrifice or to fast, the pilgrim can fast during the Mina Days."(77)

(b) Days Banned for Necessity

Because of necessity, fasting is banned on the following days:

1- Days of Menstruation and Post-Natal Menses

During menstruation and menses, a woman must not fast. If she did, It would be a sin, and her fasting would not valid. Once menstruation or menses stops, she has to make up for the fasting days she misses. Regarding obligatory prayers missed during those days, she is not to make up

for them; prayers are repeated every day, but fasting is not. Though not allowed to fast during menstruation or menses, a woman should not eat or drink openly on the days of Ramadan.

The following are related Hadiths:

- In one Hadith, explaining his description of women's 'unfulfilled faith', the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "... Isn't she banned from salaah and fasting during menstruation?..."[78]
- As related by Aisha, "When we had it (the period), we were instructed to make up for missed days of fasting, but not for missed salaah."[79]
- In another Hadith, she said, "When I had to make up for missed days of fasting during Ramadan, I could not do them except in Sha'baan."[80]

2- Voluntary Fasting without Husband's Approval

On the one hand, a wife is to get her husband's approval if she wants to do voluntary fasting; she has duties towards her husband and family responsibilities, and fasting may have negative effects. So, if he does not approve, she must not fast. On the other hand, he should let her fast if fasting does not undermine her duties.(81) The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "A wife is not to fast while her husband is not away unless she gets his permission. She is not to let anyone into their home without his permission. If she gives a charity from his money without his permission, he shares its reward."(82)

3. Fasting Leading to Death

In light of Shari'ah statements prioritizing the protection of basic necessities, life included, fasting becomes *muharram* if it threatens one's very existence. For example, Allah (ﷻ) says, "(29) O you who believe! Squander not your wealth among yourselves in vanity, except it be a trade by mutual consent, and kill not one another. Lo!

Allah is ever Merciful unto you." [4/29] He also says, "(195) Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loves the beneficent." [2/195]

NOTE

Ayah [2/195] was revealed in connection with not spending for jihad purposes while choosing staying home with family and the comfort of wealth. Whoever does this, particularly on a regular basis, causes his own ruin and incurs punishment. However, the revelation has a broader meaning. Spending includes all aspects of good, and ruin includes all possible dangers, especially to survival.(83) Also, the Hadith stresses the need to protect life; the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Let us not cause harm. Let us not return harm."(84)

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Chapter 5

Fasting Requirements & Issues

This chapter deals with the major issues of fasting. They are presented under sixteen headings:

1. Sighting the Ramadan Crescent
2. Diversity of Sighting Points
3. Sighting the Shawwaal Crescent
4. The Essence of Fasting
5. Conditions for Obligatory Fasting
6. Requirements of Valid Fasting
7. Obligatory Fasting
8. Fast-Nullifiers
9. Non-Nullifiers of Fasting
10. License to Break the Fast
11. Recommended Acts during the Fast

12. Makruuh things, to Avoid during the Fast
13. I’tikaaf (Retreat) in Ramadan
14. Voluntary Night Prayers in Ramadan
15. Observing Lailat Alqadr
16. Zakaat / Sadaqat Al-Fitr

1. Sighting the Ramadan Crescent

There are two possible scenarios for declaring the sighting of the Ramadan crescent, hence the beginning of fasting:

Scenario 1

This scenario takes place in the evening of Sha'baan 29. One Muslim that is known to be credible testifies that he has sighted the Ramadan crescent. The imam/ruler accepts the testimony - one witness is considered sufficient by the Al-Jumhuur (followers of the Hanafi, Maaliki and Hanbali schools of thought). Naturally, this makes Sha'baan 29 days.

Scenario 2

It is the evening of Sha'baan 29, and the crescent cannot be sighted. This may be due to the fact that the crescent has not emerged yet. It may be due to poor visibility caused by dust or clouds, etc. In this case, Sha'baan has to be completed

thirty days, and the day that follows marks the beginning of Ramadan and the fast. Lunar months do not exceed thirty days. The following are related Hadiths:

The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The month is twenty-nine nights. So, do not fast till you sight the crescent. If it is too blurred to sight it, let the month (of Sha'baan) be complete, (30 days)."(85)

In another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned how they calculated the month, referring to a complete one being thirty days.(86)

Abdullah Ibn Omar said, "Once, people sighted the (Ramadan) crescent, and when I told him I had seen it, he started fasting and instructed the Muslims to start too."(87)

Related Issue

Can the beginning of the Arabic month, hence of fasting, be established by calculating the lunar cycle?

Muslims are commanded to start and end the fast of Ramadan on the basis of sighting the

crescent, not of the birth or presence of the moon. It is true that observatories these days can calculate with great accuracy when the crescent is born, even calculate when it can or cannot be seen in particular places. Though undeniable, this is not taken as the mark to start or end the fast. Shari'ah categorically designates sighting the crescent to signal the beginning and end of fast. Thus, there is no conflict between the Shari'ah demand and astronomical calculations. These are concerned with accurate calculations irrespective of fasting whereas that is concerned with the command to fast once the crescent is sighted. It does not matter if the crescent is there but cannot be seen for one reason or another.

2. Diversity of Sighting Points

What is meant by "diversity of sighting points"? How is this diversity related to establishing the beginning or end of a lunar month?

Like sunrise, moonrise varies from country to country. For example, the crescent can be sighted

in one country a night earlier than in another. The minimum distance for moonrise variation is approximately 133 km.

Aljumhuur (the Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali schools of thought) argue for starting and ending the fast on the same days for all Muslims. They base their argument on this Hadith(88): "The month is twenty-nine nights. So, do not fast till you sight the crescent. If it is too blurred to sight it, let the month (of Sha'baan) be complete (30 days)".

In the light of this diversity of sighting points, some scholars following the Shaafi'i school of thought allow varied starts and ends to fasting in areas between which there are long distances. They base their ruling on a Hadith narrated by Kuraib. According to this Hadith, Muslims in Syria sighted the Ramadan crescent a night earlier than those in Madeenah, and so started their fast earlier. Kuraib witnessed the beginning of Ramadan in Syria, but witnessed the end in

Madeenah. When he asked if the Syria sighting was good for Madeenah too, Ibn Abbaas said to him, "No, it isn't, this is what the Messenger of Allah instructed us to do."(89)

Al-Jumhuur consider the fast and the break of fast on Eed Day an occasion for Muslim unity regardless of varied sighting points. They believe that if the Ramadan crescent is sighted in any country, all Muslims have to start fasting. If it is not sighted, the month of Sh'abaan has to be completed to 30 days.(90)

The Jumhuur's argument that all Muslims start fasting once the crescent is sighted in any country seems stronger. It provides for Muslim unity, while avoiding possible causes of dissension. Also, the Prophet's Hadith stresses the sighting of the crescent in general. Besides, astronomically speaking, the time difference between the most distant Muslim countries is not more than nine hours. Modern

communication has made it easy to spread the news of sighting the crescent very fast, and this is an opportunity for unifying the beginning and end of the fast.[(91)]

Thus, the issue of the diversity of sighting points is made redundant by fast communication, something that did not exist when Kuraib narrated the Hadith on the Syria-Madeenah sighting and fasting.

Waallahu a'lam (Only Allah knows the whole truth).

The above is our argument for the Jumhuur's ruling, but the whole truth is with Allah alone.

3. Sighting the Shawwaal Crescent

The end of Ramadan is established in one of the following ways:

1. If the Shawwaal crescent is sighted by two credible witnesses, the imam (ruler) declares the end of fasting - hence Ramadan is not 30 days.

2. If the crescent cannot be sighted, even in the case of a clear sky, fasting continues till day thirty - hence Ramadan is 30 days.

Whereas the declaration of fasting requires sighting the crescent by only one credible witness, the end of fasting requires two credible witnesses. Obviously, the two-witness requirement guards against possible waste of time allocated to such a great act of worship.

Related Issue

The declaration of the beginning of a lunar month generally requires two credible witnesses stating they have sighted the crescent. Only in the case of the Ramadan crescent, only one credible witness is required. The Prophet (ﷺ) would take extra precautions for sighting the Sha'baan crescent, awaiting eagerly the Ramadan crescent.[92] He said, "Do not fast a day or two ahead of Ramadan."[93] Naturally, confirmation of the beginning of Sha'baan is good for sighting the Ramadan crescent.

4. The Essence of Fasting

Fasting is basically abstinence from all fast-breakers from dawn to full sunset. Allah (ﷻ) says, "(187)... [And] eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall...." [2/187] Thus, abstinence is the essence of fasting.

5. Conditions for Obligatory Fasting

There are five conditions which make it obligatory on a person to fast. If one of the conditions is lacking, the person is not obliged to fast. They are: (a) being Muslim; (b) being sane; (c) being an adult; and being aware of obligatory fasting.

(A) Being Muslim

Naturally, fasting is not required of a non-Muslim. However, if a person becomes Muslim during Ramadan, he /she is to start fasting, but

without having to make up for days missed as *kaafir*. Allah (ﷻ) forgives one's sins committed before being Muslim. Allah (ﷻ) says, "Tell those who disbelieve that if they cease, that which is past will be forgiven them ..." [8/38] Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "... Becoming Muslim abolishes previous sins."(94)(95)

(B) Being sane

Basically, no obligation is addressed to someone that is insane or unable to reason. Acts of worship require awareness and the ability to reason. According to the Hadith, "Three types of people are ont held accountable: someone insane; someone asleep; and a child, who has not reached puberty."(96)

Related Issue

What about someone that gets drunk? Does he have to fast? Does he have to make up for what he misses?

A drunk person is normally sane, and so is

obliged to fast. By getting drunk, the fasting condition of mental awareness is lacking. So, he has committed a sin deliberately, and he may commit another if he does not fast as a result. In this case, he has to fast as soon as he recovers from drunkenness, and has to make up for what he may miss.

(C) Being an Adult

Adulthood indicates awareness of the significance of duties and obligations and pure surrender. It is a state not characteristic of a child. So, one is not required to fast till one has reached puberty.

Related Question

Is it all right to tell a young boy or girl that can reason well enough, e.g. at the age of six, to fast? Will such fast count?

Answer

If the young can endure the fast, it is all right to

ask them to fast. It is a kind of training, and it counts, as *salaah* does. However, fasting needs endurance, but *salaah* is not as demanding as fasting.

(D) Being Aware of Obligatory Fasting

When a Muslim that fulfills the conditions of adulthood and sanity learns that the Ramadan crescent has been sighted, he / she has to start fasting. This is normally the case in Muslim communities, where information is not lacking in that regard.

Related Question

What about a new Muslim in a non-Muslim country?

Answer

Modern communication has made the Ramadan news available to all in no time. Therefore, knowledge necessary for the start of fasting is not a problem anymore.

6. Requirements of Valid Fasting

What makes one's fast valid? Three things do. They are: (a) being Muslim; (b) intention; and (c) no menstruation or menses in the case of females.

(A) Being Muslim

The state of being Muslim obliges one to observe the fast, and it is a criterion for its validity too. In other words, a non-Muslim's fast does not count. However, a new Muslim does not have to make up for days missed before adopting Islam. "Becoming Muslim abolishes all previous sins."(97)

(B) Intention

The Muslim who is obliged to fast must have the intention to do the fast on a particular day. For example, one has to have the intention tonight for fasting tomorrow in the case of obligatory fasting, e.g. Ramadan. If, at night,

one intends not to fast during the following day, yet abstains from fast-breakers that day, one's abstenance does not count as fasting because of the lack of intention. Similarly, one's fast does not count if, during the day, one changes intention not to continue fasting despite abstenance from fast-breakers. As an act of worship, fasting is not valid without the intention to do it. According to the Hadith, "If one does not have the intention to fast (obligatorily), one's fast is not valid."[98]

As for voluntary fasting, it is not necessary to have the intention the night before; in this case, one can have the intention before noon, and the fast remains valid. As related by 'Aishah, "The Prophet once came in and asked me: 'O 'Aishah, is there anything to eat?' 'We have nothing,' I answered. 'Well, I am fasting, then,' said the Prophet."[99]

(C) No Menstruation or Menses

A woman must not fast when she is in menstruation or menses. So, if she gets the period during the day while fasting, this stops the fast, and she has to make up for it later. Also, if the period stops at night, she has to make the intention to fast the following day. This way, her fast is valid, even if she did not do a purification wash, which is necessary for *salaah*.

Related Question 1

If a Muslim wakes up in a state that requires a purification wash, does his / her fast remain valid?

Answer 1

Yes, it remains valid. For example, having wet dreams during a fasting day does not spoil one's fast. Also, the fast is not spoiled by not having done the purification wash after having had

intercourse during the night. This, as mentioned in the Hadith, happened to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he continued his fast.[100]

Related Question 2

Does an apostate who has returned to Islam have to make up for missed fasting?

Answer 2

Yes, he /she does. Before quitting Islam he had been under obligation to fast. Therefore, once back to Islam, he / she has to make up for it.

Wallaahu a'lam (Only Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) knows the whole truth).

Related Question 3

What about the fast of one who quit Islam after having intended to fast?

Answer 3

The fast in such a case is not valid.

7. Obligatory Fasting

The Muslim must be fully aware of how to observe the obligatory types of fasting. The following are certain things that have to be observed:

(A) Consecutiveness

- In the case of Ramadan one has to fast all of it, which is naturally consecutive. "... And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month,...." [2/185]
- In the case of fasting as atonement for killing by mistake, the fast has to be done consecutively. "(92) ... And whoso has not the wherewithal must fast two consecutive months. A penance from Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise." [4/92]
- If atoning for a *dhihaar* statement (saying to one's wife that she is forbidden to him as his mother is), one has to observe consecutive

fasting. "(4) And he who finds not (the wherewithal), let him fast for two successive months before they touch one another;..." [58/4]

- Consecutive fasting is required for atoning for intercourse on a Ramadan day if one cannot afford to free a slave. It is called "major atonement", and in this case, one has to fast two consecutive months. According to a related Hadith, a man could not afford to free a slave as atonement, was unable to fast two consecutive months either and could not afford to feed sixty needy people. To help him atone for his sin, the Prophet (ﷺ) got him some food to give the needy, but the man happened to have the poorest family in Al-Madeenah. Smiling, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to give the food to his poor family.[101]
- Consecutive fasting is also necessary if one pledges or takes an oath to fast a number of

particular consecutive days, e.g. the first ten days of Rajab or the month of Sha'baan.

(B) Non-Obligatory Consecutiveness

There is obligatory fasting that does not have to be done consecutively, as in the following cases:

- If one has to make up for days missed in Ramadan, it is recommended that one should do it as soon as possible and consecutively However, consecutiveness is not obligatory. In this regard, Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says, "... [And] (for) him who is sick among you, or on a journey, (the same) number of other days;..."[2/184] This Qur'anic statement does not demand consecutiveness. There must be no fasting on days designated as no-fasting days, e.g. Eed days.
- In the *tamattu'* style *hajj*, a pilgrim does *omrah* first, has a break from *ihram*, and then starts Hajj with new *ihram*. In this case, the pilgrim

has to offer a sacrifice,(102) but if this is unaffordable, the pilgrim has to fast ten days of the Hajj month prefrebly three days during the *hajj* time and seven after returning home. It is recommended that the three days be before the 10th of Thul-Hijjah - excluding the 9th (the Arafa Day) - or be the 11th, 12th and 13th. Allah (ﷻ) says, "(196)... And if you are in safety, then whosoever contents himself with the *omrah* for the pilgrimage (shall give) such gifts as can be had with ease. And whosoever cannot find (such gifts), then a fast of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when you have returned; that is, ten in all. That is for him whose folk are not present at Al-Masjid Al-Haraam. Observe *taqwa* of Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.'" [2/196]

- When on *omrah* or *hajj*, a Muslim may have to offer a ransom for certain violations of related

rituals. For example, he /she may use perfume, shave or have a haircut while in the state of *ihram*. Fasting three days is one way of atoning for such violations. The three days do not have to be consecutive.

- It is forbidden for a Muslim in a state of *ihram* to kill animals in hunting. Any violation of this prohibition necessitates atonement. Fasting is one option for atonement. With respect to this violation, Allah (ﷻ) says, "(95) O you who believe! Kill no wild game while you are on the pilgrimage. Whoso of you kills it of set purpose he shall pay its forfeit in the equivalent of that which he has killed, of domestic animals, the judge to be two men among you known for justice; (the forfeit) to be brought as an offering to the Ka'bah; or, for expiation, he shall feed poor persons, or the equivalent thereof in fasting, that he may taste the evil consequences of his deed. Allah

forgives whatever (of this kind) may have happened in the past, but whoso relapses, Allah will take retribution from him. Allah is Mighty, Able to Requite (the wrong). " [5/95] This Ayah does not demand the fast of consecutive days.

In this regard, there is agreement among the *ulama* on banning hunting completely in the *haram* area, regardless of *ihram*. This ban applies to killing, wounding, harming, usurping and scaring animals as well as to helping in the hunt. Suppose someone kills an animal in the *haram* area, it is a sin that necessitates atonement. In this case, one may choose to offer an equivalent animal, if available, as a sacrifice to be slaughtered and given to the poor of the *haram* area. For example, a camel can be sacrificed for an ostrich, a cow for a wild buffalo and a goat for a gazelle. Instead of offering a sacrifice, one may choose to estimate the price of the equivalent

animal and buy food for the poor of the *haram* area. One may also choose to fast a number of days equal to the number of poor people whom the estimated price was going to cover in terms of food. The second and third options apply if there are no equivalent animals available.

For those in a state of *ihram*, they are particularly banned from hunting regardless of place. This ban applies to buying, selling or milking such wild animals. However, the ban does not apply to fishing at all. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says, "(96) To hunt and to eat the fish of the sea is made lawful for you, a provision for you and for seafarers; but to hunt on land is forbidden you so long as you are on the pilgrimage...." [5/96]

- If a Muslim has to atone for an oath that is not fulfilled, he / she may have to fast three days in case he / she cannot afford the feeding or clothing ten poor people or the freeing of a slave. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says, "(89) Allah will not take you to

task for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the oaths which you swear in earnest. The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten of the needy with the average of that wherewith you feed your own folk, or the clothing of them, or the liberation of a slave, and for him who finds not (the wherewithal to do so) then a three day fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when you have sworn; and keep your oaths. Thus Allah expounds unto you His revelations in order that you may give thanks."[4/89]

This Ayah includes three ways of atoning for unfulfilled oaths. They start with the easiest, and one of them is sufficient. If one cannot atone by any of them, one can fast three days.(103)

8. Fast-Nullifiers

Fast-nullifiers top the list of questions frequently asked, particularly during the month of Ramadan. They fall into three categories:

general nullifiers; nullifiers requiring making up; and nullifiers requiring making up and atonement.

(A) General Fast-Nullifiers

Fasting is generally nullified if one of its conditions is violated. For example, fast is nullified if one becomes no-Muslim, or one starts menstruating. Fast is also nullified by any deliberate act of drinking, eating or taking medicine or anything into the stomach through the body's openings as well as intercourse.

(B) Nullifiers Requiring Only Making up for Nullified Days

The following are examples of cases where one has to make up for nullified fast without atonement:

1. Deliberate eating or drinking of something that is not normally eaten or drunk (e.g. uncooked rice or drinking alcohol used for burning) or taking medicine through the

mouth. In such cases, fast is clearly nullified by the deliberate in-take of things to the stomach, and one is just required to make up for nullified days.

2. For one reason or another, one may not be aware that the fasting day has started or has not ended, and so one eats, drinks, etc. In this case, the fast is nullified, and one has to just make up for it.
3. In cases of ejaculation by other than intercourse, one has just to make up for the spoiled fast.

(C) Nullifiers Requiring Making up for Nullified Days and Atonement

Two acts nullify the fast, and they require atonement in addition to making up for nullified days.

1. Deliberate intercourse during a Ramadan day requires making up for the day as well as

atoning for spoiling the fast. To atone in this case, one has to free a slave; if this is impossible, one has to fast for two consecutive months; if this is impossible, one has to feed sixty needy people - a meal each - from normally available food.

Related Question 1

What about wives in this case?

The making up and the atonement apply to husbands and wives alike if they are deliberately involved. If the wife is forced into it, she has only to make up for the day, but she does not have to do any atoning. Atonement is necessary only if she becomes willingly involved.[(104)]

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth).

Related Question 2

What about interrupting the required successive 2-month fast?

Answer 2

According to the Hadith, one has to fast two consecutive months.[105] So, if interruption is for valid reasons, such as illness or the period, there is no problem. One has to resume fasting once reasons end. Yet, if interruption is deliberate or for no valid reasons, there is a problem; one has to start the fast of two months afresh.

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth).

Related Question 3

What about the atonement for intercourse on more than one day in Ramadan?

Answer:

There has to be one-time atonement for each single day.

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth).

Related Question 4

What about atonement for intercourse on a

make-up day for a Ramadan day?

Answer:

No atonement is necessary in this case. One has only to fast another day instead.

2. One's fast is nullified if one deliberately eats or drinks despite being physically able, having made the intention to fast, and having no valid reason to break the fast. Muslims must guard against nullifying their fast. Regrettably, some people nullify their fast by smoking, thus committing two sins: spoiling the fast and damaging their health. May Allah protect us from such things. Medical literature affirms and warns against the damage smoking causes. As the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Let us not cause harm. Let us not return harm."[(106)]

Note

It is advisable that one abstain from other fast-breakers, e.g. food and drink, if one has already spoiled the fast by intercourse; there is no need to

indulge in further violations on a Ramadan day.

9. Non-Nullifiers of Fasting

This section contains acts that do not spoil the fast. These acts can be described as follows: they are not deliberate; one cannot guard against them; there are no definite statements in Shari'ah regarding them; they may have no precedents to compare with; they may have doubtful elements; they may have been allowed during the day in Ramadan and other months; and they are not things to eat or drink, nor are they like eating or drinking. The following are examples of things that do not spoil the fast:

1. Swallowing saliva, even if accumulated in the mouth.
2. Swallowing nasal discharge.
3. Inhaling or swallowing dust entering the mouth from the air.
4. Eating and drinking because one has

forgotten one is fasting.

5. Perfuming oneself and dying hair, hands or feet with henna.
6. Gargling and inhaling water into the nose for cleaning - exaggeration of these two acts deliberately letting water into the stomach spoils the fast.
7. Swallowing whatever is left between teeth not deliberately or by mistake.
8. Unavoidable vomiting - if it is done deliberately, one has to make up for the day.(107)(108)
9. Kissing that does not cause ejaculation.
10. Emission of sperm due to repeated looking.
11. Repeated looks that do not cause ejaculation.
12. Emission of sperm or semen caused by thoughts.
13. Thinking it is not dawn yet, without having evidence to the contrary; in this case one's fast

is considered valid; if one realizes later that dawn has been there already, one has to make up for the day. The same applies to the case of breaking fast thinking the sun has set, but realizing later that it has not set yet.

14. Cleaning teeth with the *siwaak* during the day, but without swallowing parts of the *siwaak*, does not spoil the fast. However, the smell of one's mouth during the fast is considered by Allah (ﷻ), to be better than the fragrance of musk.

15. Putting eye-drops in one's eye and putting kohl on the eyelashes and eyelids do not spoil one's fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) put kohl during the fast,[109] and he told a Muslim with a troubled eye he could use kohl.[110]

16. Inhaling air perfumed with sweet smell, such as musk, does not spoil one's fast. However one has to avoid the deliberate inhalation of its smoke directly into his system, otherwise

the fast is spoiled.

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah (ﷻ) knows the whole truth).

17. Treatment with cubing, which involves sucking blood out of the body, does not spoil one's fast, but it is not recommended.[111]

18. Taking a shower / bath does not spoil one's fast. According to the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) washed his body while fasting. [112]

19. Putting drops (medicine) into the penis does not spoil the fast.

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth).

20. Entry of such things as dust into one's mouth does not spoil one's fast, as one cannot help it.

Thus, the above-mentioned 20 acts are cases that do not spoil one's fast.[113] As mentioned earlier, they are characterized by the following: they are not deliberate; one cannot just guard

against them; there are no specifically related rulings, while comparison to other cases is not possible; and forgetfulness is involved. These can help make one aware of what spoils the fast and what does not.

10. License to Break Fast(114)

There are seven situations in which one is licensed not to fast. They are: (1) illness; (2) travelling; (3) pregnancy; (4) breast-feeding; (5) old age; (6) extreme fatigue due to thirst or hunger; and (7) coercion. Two more situations are related to jihad, i.e. fighting or awaiting battle, which will not be served properly by thirst and hunger.

(1) Illness

Giving the license to break the fast in illness, Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says, "... [And] whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of

other days...."[2/185]

What illness qualifies for the license to break the fast?

There are three illness scenarios:

1. One expects that fasting will most probably cause one's death.
2. One expects that fasting will lead to grave physical harm, e.g. loss of hearing or eyesight.
3. One expects that fasting will certainly complicate illness and delay recovery, or that fasting is unbearable in illness.

In the first two scenarios, one must not fast, for the preservation of life and important body functions is necessary. As for the third scenario, one is allowed to break the fast. In fact, fasting is not recommended. One has to guard against whatever may eventually threaten one's life, such as advanced stage of diabetes, severe stomach ulcers causing bleeding, acute kidney

inflammation, bronchitis, heart diseases and sclerosis.

Related Question

Does one have to make the intention by night to take the license not to fast the following day?

Answer

No, it is not necessary according to Al-Jamhoor, but Imam Shafi'i considers it necessary only if illness is not continuous.

(2) Traveling

The license not to fast when traveling is included in the illness-related Ayah: "... [And] whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days...."[2/185]

What travel qualifies for breaking fast?

There are four conditions for the license to break fast when traveling:

1. The distance to travel must be long enough to permit shortening *salaah*. In fact, there is no

definite statement specifying the distance that qualifies for shortening *salaah* or breaking fast. However, it is implied in one Hadith; the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "No woman that believes in Allah and the Last Day is to travel a distance that takes one day and night without a *mahram*."(115) This distance is taken as minimum that qualifies for shortening *salaah* and breaking fast. It is estimated to be approximately 89 km.

2. The traveler must not make the intention to reside in one place for four days and nights.(116)

3. The journey has to be for a permissible purpose, i.e. not for sin; the license is meant to ease one's suffering, not to help in sin.(117)

4. One must set off and leave the residential areas of one's town /village before the break of dawn. Even if dawn breaks when traveling, one is licensed to break fast.

Related Question

When does the license expire?

Answer

It expires in two cases: (1) if one intends to have permanent residence in the place of destination, or if his stay reaches four days and nights and beyond; (2) as soon as one returns to his home place, be it night or day.

(3) Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

A pregnant woman is allowed to fast. Also, a woman breastfeeding is allowed to fast, providing there is no menses. However, both of them are licensed to break fast if there is danger to their health or to their babies - a pregnant woman feels for a baby inside her the way she feels for a part of her body.(118) The two types of woman can also break fast if they have to act to prevent illness or complications.

This is how the license applies:

1. If there is a direct or indirect threat to their lives or the lives of their babies or their health, a pregnant woman and a breastfeeding woman must not fast.
2. If there is danger of falling ill or complication of illness - as based on previous experience or on a report by a responsible Muslim doctor - or if fasting is unbearable, the two types of woman are licensed to break their fast.

Related Question

What does a pregnant or breastfeeding woman have to do if she breaks her fast?

Answer

In this respect, these statements are relevant:

"... [And] for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need...." [2/184]

"... [And] whosoever of you is sick or on a

journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days...."[2/185]

Al-Jumhuur rule that if the mother fears for her life, she has only to make up for the missed days later, when the conditions for the license stop. If she fears for her baby, she has to make up for the missed days and to pay ransom, feeding one needy person per missed day. The make-up fast is considered for herself, whereas the ransom for the baby.

Wallaahu a'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth).

4. Aging

Aging people have a health problem. Their health deteriorates as they grow old till they die. They become chronically unable to fast. Therefore, they have a license to break their fast and pay ransom of feeding a needy person per missed day. This is in line with Ibn Abbaas's interpretation of the ransom Ayah (2/184).(119)

5. Extreme Fatigue

Like illness, extreme fatigue is a good enough reason for a license to break fast. It can be a threat to life, which Islam considers obligatory to preserve. If one feels there is a high probability of risk to his life due to fatigue, one has the license to break fast. This applies to those with extremely physically demanding jobs, such as mining. However, they have to make up for the days they miss.(120)It applies also to the case of Jihad (fighting in defense of home). Defenders have to be physically able to repel aggression, and so they qualify for the license to break their fast, even if in a stationary position. They have to make up for missed days as soon as war is over.(121)

6. Coercion

If one is forced to break fast, for example under a threat of death, one is licensed to break fast. Also, if water is forced into one's throat,

one's fast is remains valid, and there is no need for any make up fasting. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Allah forgives my nation for things done by mistake, things done in forgetfulness and things done under coercion."(122)

11. Recommended Acts during the Fast

Prescribing fast, Allah (ﷻ) says, "(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may achieve *taqwa*." [2/183] The Ayah states the purpose of fasting; it is the achievement of *taqwa*. Fasting is a unique experience where one exercises self-discipline, patience, submission to Allah (ﷻ), association with the usual state of the poor and needy and sharing and caring, seeking to please Allah (ﷻ).

Ten things can be recommended for the achievement of the desired *taqwa* through fasting:

1. Restraining the Senses

A heart accustomed to such sins as lying and backbiting will direct the senses to committing them. This, in turn, reinforces the worsening of the heart. In contrast, through sense restraint from sins, the heart becomes accustomed to resisting them. Thus, it occupies itself and the senses with positive acts of worship, such as remembrance of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), reading the Qur'an and doing good. Fasting is a great opportunity for heart purification and sense discipline. One can become so forgiving that one does not return an offense. As the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Fasting is protection. When fasting, you must not call bad names or offend anyone. If one tries to quarrel with you or call you bad names, you should say twice: I am fasting."(123) This is how one can restrain the tongue.

Regarding the eyes, they have to be restrained from looking at obscenities and forbidden things.

Instead, they have to be directed to reflecting on Allah's Book and on His great creation. Similarly, hearing has to be restrained from listening to slandering, lies and obscenities in general. Instead, it should concentrate on listening to what is good, such as, useful knowledge and Qur'anic recitations. The same logic applies to the other senses.

The following Qur'anic statements are relevant to the argument for the role of the heart and the senses:

- "(70) O you who believe! Guard your duty to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), and speak words straight to the point; (71) He will adjust your works for you and will forgive you your sins...." [33 - 70-71]
- "(42) Listeners for the sake of falsehood! Greedy for illicit gain! If then they have recourse unto you (Mohammad) judge between them or disclaim jurisdiction. If you disclaim jurisdiction, then they cannot harm

you at all. But if you judge, judge between them with equity. Lo! Allah loves the equitable. "[5:42]

- "(30) Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is Aware of what they do."[24: 30]

Regarding related Hadiths, the Prophet (ﷺ) says:

"If one does not refrain from giving and using false witness, Allah sees no benefit in one's abstaining from drink and food."(124)This Hadith affirms how fasting, as an act of worship, has a practical function as well. It is expected to reform behavior by preventing one from committing sins.

2. Greater Generosity

Muslims are encouraged to one vie for doing good, such as giving charity, caring for those in distress, being good and generous to family relatives. According to the Hadith, "The

Prophet was the most generous of all, and he was especially generous in Ramadan, when Jibreel (angel Gabriel) would meet him every night for the recitation of the Qur'an. The Messenger of Allah was more generous than the (good) wind sent with rain.(125)

Following in the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ), a lot of wealthy Muslims make Ramadan the time to pay their *zakaah*. In fact, they give a lot of charity during it, too. Ramadan is an opportunity for Muslims to do good and to get manifold rewards from Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Man is rewarded in multiples for his deeds. For one good deed one is given a reward ranging from tenfold to 700 folds, except fasting, for which Allah rewards accordingly; Allah says: 'Man abstains from food and dink in order to please Me.' The Muslim who observes the fast rejoices twice: once on having breakfast; and another on meeting Allah. Even the smell of the Muslim's mouth during the fast is considered by Allah, to

be better than the fragrance of musk."[126]

3. Inviting Fellow Muslims to Breakfast

Muslims are encouraged to invite fellow Muslims to breakfast on Ramadan evenings, even if the breakfast is only a date or a drink of water. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If one invites to breakfast a fasting fellow Muslim, one gets a reward similar to that of his fellow Muslim, but without reducing the latter's reward."[127]

4. The *Suhuur* tradition

Muslims are encouraged to have *suhuur* (something to eat or drink, however little it might be, anytime before the fasting day begins). It may be as little as a mouthful of water, and it may begin after the middle of the night.[128]The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Have *suhuur*. It is a blessing."[129]*Suhuur* distinguishes our fast from that of the People of the Book."[130]He also says, "*Suhuur* is a blessed meal and so you should not miss it, even if it is only a mouthful of water; Allah

(ﷻ) and His angels pray for those having *suhuur*."[131]

5. Delaying ***Suhuur***

The Prophet (ﷺ) encourages Muslims not to delay breaking their fast once the sun sets, while encouraging them to delay *suhuur* as late as possible, but not to miss it. In one Hadith, he says, "It is good for people to break their fast as soon as possible."[132]In another Hadith, he says, "It is good for my nation to break their fast as soon as possible, but to have *suhuur* as late as possible."[133]

At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the period between *suhuur* and the dawn prayer was estimated as very short. This is mentioned in a number of Hadiths. For example, Zaid Ibn Thaabit estimated it as the period taken to recite about 50 Qura'nic verses.[134]It was also estimated as short a period as that between a call made by Bilal and another made by Ibn Om

Maktoom.[135] This was made for the dawn prayer, but that was made very shortly before it.[136]Showing how short it was, Sahl Ibn Saad said, "I would have *suhuur* with my family, but I had to hurry to catch prostration or the dawn prayer in congregation with the Prophet."[137]

Related Question

What is the wisdom underlying the recommendation of having *suhuur* and as late as possible? Isn't Ramadan supposed to be a month for thirst and hunger?

Answer

The Prophet (ﷺ) has established the *suhuur* tradition as ease for those fasting. It is not obligatory, yet it is recommended for blessings' sake. It also serves to prevent non-stop fasting.[138]However, the practice of overeating at *suhuur* time spoils the expected benefits of fasting. As mentioned in the Hadith, a mouthful of water is good enough for *suhuur*.

Wal-laahu a'lam (Only Allah knows the whole truth).

6. Early Break of Fast

As soon as the sun sets (hence the call for the sunset prayer), Muslims should break their fast without delay. Calling on them to complete their fast, the Qur'an says, "Then, complete the fast till nighttime." [2/187] The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "It is good for people to break their fast as soon as possible."(139) "The Prophet would break his fast by eating moist dates before (the sunset) salaah."(140)In one Hadith, he says, "When night comes from that direction and day goes in that direction, and the sun sets, it is time for breaking fast."(141)According to a Qudsi Hadith, "Allah, the Almighty, the Exalted, says: The sooner My slaves break their fast, the more I love them."(142)

7. Dates for Breakfast

Breaking fast, Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ)

would eat some dates. When there were no dates, he would have a drink of water.(143)

8. Prayers on Breaking Fast

As the Prophet (ﷺ) used to do, Muslims should take the opportunity of breaking fast to say some prayers. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The Muslim observing fast is privileged with an answerable prayer on breaking fast."(144) On breaking his fast, the Prophet (ﷺ) would pray, "Thirst has gone, veins have been moistened and the reward has been fixed by the Grace of Allah. O Allah, for Your Sake I have fasted, and on Your provision I have broken my fast."(145)

9. Reciting the Qur'an & Religious Studies & Remembrance

As a blessed month, Ramadan is an opportunity for Muslims to remember Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) as much as possible in a variety of ways: in word and deed and established acts of worship. It is known for being the month of active worship, especially for Qur'an reading and religious

learning. It was in Ramadan that Allah (ﷻ) sent down His revelations. As mentioned in Surat Al-Baqarah, "(185) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)." [2/185] Also, Ramadan was the time during which Angel Jibreel used to meet the Prophet (ﷺ) for studying the Qur'an.

10. I'tikaaf (Retreat)

It is advisable for a Muslim to do *i'tikaaf*, once in a while during the month of Ramadan. The last ten days of Ramadan are most opportune for retreat, because they have Lailat Al-Qadr (the Night of Decree / Power). The Qur'an describes it as better than a thousand months. On it, devout Muslims do as much remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) as possible, say as many prayers as possible and recite as much Qur'an as they can. "It was the Prophet's custom to make retreat, in the mosque, during the last ten days of Ramadan. It went on

till his death, and his wives continued the tradition of retreat afterwards."[146] According to the Hadith, "Once the (last) ten days started, he would intensify worship in seclusion,[147] stay up the night (in worship) and wake his wives up (for the same purpose)."[148]

12. Makruuh Things, to Avoid during the Fast

Things are considered *makruuh* if done during fasting if they cause weakness, spoil the fast or reduce rewards. They are to be avoided. It is *makruuh* to do such things as the following:

1. Hijaamah (Cubbing)

Hijaamah refers to taking blood out of the body by suction or bleeding. This involves loss of blood, and, therefore, weakens the body. Thus, one had better avoid *hijaamah* while fasting.[149]

2. Tasting Food

One is not to taste food without good reasons or real need. Food going into the mouth may

spoil the fast, as it may go down the throat. As Imam Ahmad puts it, "It is better not to taste food during the fast. Yet, if done, it will not be that terrible."[150] For example, a cook may need to check how salty food is; a mother may have to chew a bit food for her baby; or one may have to check if food has gone bad or not. In contrast, there is no need, for example, to taste honey or milk for in order to compare types. In this case, tasting is considered (*makruuh*).[151]

3. Kissing Spouse

Kissing may lead to spoiling the fast. For example, it may eventually cause ejaculation or intercourse. Therefore, one had better avoid it. However, there is no harm in kissing if it is certain it will not result in spoiling the fast. The view on kissing applies to touching and hugging. The following are related Hadiths:

- As narrated by 'A'ishah, "The Prophet would kiss and play (with his wives)

during the fast, but he was in perfect control of himself."[152]

- She also said, "The Messenger of Allah kissed some of his wives while fasting...."[153]
- "In one case, the Prophet told one youth not to kiss his wife, but, in another case, he told an old man he could kiss his wife."[154]

4. Extreme Gargling

The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Be generous with washing for salaah; let water go through fingers "and toes"; and take water in through your nose to clean it unless you are fasting."[155] While fasting, the Muslim is to avoid over-gargling. The same applies to taking water in through the nose. In either case, water may pass through the throat, spoiling the fast.[156]

5. Chewing Gum

It is advisable to avoid chewing gum, especially

if it contains any components of nutritious value, such as sugar. At best, chewing it means passing a lot of saliva into the stomach, causing thirst. At worst, nutritious elements passing into the stomach will spoil one's fast.

6. Other Practices

Among other acts deemed *makruuh* during the month of Ramadan, are the following: deliberate delay of breakfast; continued fasting without having *suhuur*; using foul language, especially when angry; spending too much time watching television. Doing such things is more harmful than useful.

13. I'tikaaf (Retreat) in Ramadan(157)

Meaning and Opportune Times for I'tikaaf

The Arabic word *i'tikaaf* has a general meaning and a specific one. In general, it means "keeping or continuing to do something", be it good or evil. This meaning was mentioned in

three Qur'anic verses (Surat Al-Anbiya'/ 52; Surat Ta Ha/ 91; and Al-Baqarah/187).

As for the specific meaning, in Shari'ah, *i'tikaaf* refers to retreat or staying in the mosque, as an act of worship, seeking to please Allah (ﷻ). It requires that one be able to reason and be in a state of *tahaarah* (cleanliness, required for *salaah*).(158)This is understood from Surat Al-Baqarah, Ayah 187, which commands the Muslims in a state of *i'tikaaf* not to have intercourse with their wives. As mentioned earlier, "It was the Prophet's custom to make *i'tikaaf* / retreat, in the mosque, during the last ten days of Ramadan. It went on till his death, and his wives continued the tradition of retreat afterwards."(159)

As for the ruling on *i'tikaaf*, it is a recommended sunnah /tradition to be done any time, but it is considered best during the last ten days of Ramadan because of Lailat Al-Qadr (the

Night of Decree / Power). If a pledge, *i'tikaaf* has to be fulfilled in terms of duration, sequence, etc. as pledged. In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If one makes a pledge to Allah to do good, one has to fulfill it."(160) According to another, Omar Ibn Al-Khattaab mentioned that had made a pledge before Islam to make *i'tikaaf in the Haraam Mosque* for one night. The Prophet (ﷺ) told him to fulfill it.(161)

I'tikaaf Place

Regarding where to make *i'tikaaf*, the *ulama* are agreed that it must be in the mosque. In other words, for *i'tikaaf* to be valid, it has to be in a mosque, which is a house meant for worship. All mosques are good, for Allah (ﷻ) does not specify a particular mosque in the related Ayah ("... Touch them not [your wives] while you are in *i'tikaaf* in the mosques ...") [2/187]. As for the best of all places for *i'tikaaf*, they are in descending order, the Haraam Mosque, in Makkah, the

Prophet's Mosque, in Medina, and Al-Aqsa Mosque, in Alquds (Jerusalem). Also, apart from those three, a *jaami'* (a bigger mosque where the Friday prayer is performed) is considered better than a non-*jaami* mosque; one does not have to go out, breaking retreat, for the Friday prayer.(162)

With respect to women's *i'tikaaf*, they can make it at home for privacy reasons. In the Shaafi'i view, women's *i'tikaaf* in the mosque is not recommended, while the Hanafi view demands that it be done in the place where they usually pray at home, as a condition for validity.(163)

I'tikaaf Times

A Muslim can make *i'tikaaf* any time of the year. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have made it for ten days in the month of Shawwaal.(164) However, Ramadan is considered the best for *i'tikaaf*, particularly in the last ten days; during

these, the Prophet (ﷺ) regularly made *i'tikaaf*, and so did his wives after his death.[165]

It is recommended that one start and end *i'tikaaf* immediately after performing a dawn prayer,[166] as the Prophet (ﷺ) did.[167] According to one Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) and some of his companions once made *i'tikaaf* during the middle ten days of Ramadan, and they left the mosque on the morning of the twentieth.[168]

Related Question

Does the recommendation of starting and ending *i'tikaaf* after the dawn prayer apply to all types?

Answer

For night *i'tikaaf* only, it should start a little before sunset, and end after dawn; for day *i'tikaaf* only, it should start immediately after dawn and end after sunset; for *i'tikaaf* of both day and night, it should start and end before sunset.[169]

I'tikaaf Conditions

Valid *i'tikaaf* requires the following: (1) being Muslim; (2) being able to reason and distinguish things; (3) having the intention to make it (4) being in a state of cleanliness, e.g. no menstruation or *janaabah* (*janaabah* refers to the physical state after intercourse or wet dreams, which requires washing the whole body); (5) and taking place in a mosque.

Related Question 1

Is it necessary to fast as a condition for valid *i'tikaaf*?

Answer 1

Let us first examine the following Qur'anic statement and Hadith. The Qur'an says, "(187)... Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not [your wives] while you are in *i'tikaaf* in the mosques...."[2/187] In the Hadith, Omar Ibn Al-Khattaab said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "Before Islam, I made a pledge for *i'tikaaf in the*

Haraam Mosque for one night."[170] The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him, "Fulfill it then."[171]The Ayah mentions *i'tikaaf* after fasting, as if implying the latter is a condition for the former. In fact, fasting is not a condition for *i'tikaaf*. The Hadith mentions *i'tikaaf* for a night, at which there is no fasting. Although most of the Prophet's *i'tikaaf* was made while fasting, he made *i'tikaaf* in the month of Shawwaal, as mentioned earlier. Also, Omar's Hadith is about one night's *i'tikaaf*.[172]Besides, no *ulama* have ever ruled that fasting is a condition for *i'tikaaf*. Another conclusion can be made from the Hadith in relation to the length of *i'tikaaf* time; there are no conditions or set limits.[173]

Related Question 2

Is there a minimum or a maximum period of time for *i'tikaaf*?

Answer 2

Obviously, a minimum period of *i'tikaaf*

should be one day or one night. This period is good enough to satisfy the meaning of *i'tikaaf,* i.e. binding oneself to something. As for the maximum period of *i'tikaaf*, there is no limit. However, considering the Prophet's *sunnah*, he often used to make *i'tikaaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan. He also made *i'tikaaf* during the month of Shawwaal. In his last year, the Prophet (ﷺ) made *i'tikaaf* for 20 days.(174) Various reasons have been put forward to explain the 20-day period.(175) Regardless of the length of *i'tikaaf* time, the Prophet's acts imply the value of doing more and more good. However, it should not be too long to take one away from one's family and earning a living.

Wallaahu A'lam (only Allah knows the whole truth.)(176)

What Spoils I'tikaaf

As clearly stated in the Qur'an, a Muslim in retreat must avoid all sexual contact with wife.

"(187)... [And] touch them not [your wives] while you are in *i'tikaaf* in the mosques...."[2/187] Retreat is an act of worship, and it is meant to be in the mosque. One must not leave the mosque except for necessary matters, such as food and the call of nature.(177) Once the urgent matter is over, one has to return to retreat. Even visiting the sick is not recommended during *i'tikaaf*."(178)As related by 'Aisha, "When in *i'tikaaf*, the Messenger of Allah never left the mosque for the house unless it was necessary."(179)Thus, sexual intercourse nullifies *i'tikaaf*, and going out of the mosque deliberately and without real need(180) ends *i'tikaaf*.(181)However, a wife can visit her husband during *I'tikaaf*.(182)

What One Can Do during i'tikaaf

I'tikaaf is meant to provide seclusion for concentrated worship. As an important spiritual experience, it has a disciplining impact on self.

One voluntarily denies oneself material pleasures for a period of time. This brings one closer to Allah (ﷻ) and leads to spiritual uplifting and rewards from Him. Out of this experience, one feels better and stronger.

In order to make the best out of the *i'tikaaf* period, the following is a list of what the Muslim can do:

1. It is advisable to pray, read the Qur'an, learn parts of it by heart, acquire religious knowledge, engage in academic discourse, or engage in remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) and supplication.
2. It is advisable to pray for the Prophet (ﷺ) as much as possible, especially on Fridays. In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Friday is one of your best days; Adam was created on a Friday; he died on a Friday; the horn will be blown (announcing Doomsday); and the Destruction (of this world) will occur on a

Friday. So, pray for me as often as you can. Your deeds will be shown to me."[183]

3. It is advisable to supplicate Allah (ﷻ) as much as possible, observing proper etiquette and opportune times. These times include: when prostrating; when fasting; the odd-numbered nights of the last ten days of Ramadan; between the call for salaah and the start of salaah; and the opportune period on Fridays. This period is believed to be from the time the imam sits on the pulpit till the end of the Friday salaah. Others believe it is the hour before sunset on Fridays.[184]Sahar time (the last third of the night, preceding dawn) is also good for supplicating Allah (ﷻ), especially when praying for fellow Muslims in need or affliction. Praying for the followers of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) at this time is highly rewarded - one can get a reward equal to the rewards of whomever one prays for.

4. It is advisable to avoid unnecessary talk and arguments when in *i'tikaaf*. This is for reflection. However, if one has to talk, one is to say good things. The Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If you really believe in Allah and the Last Day, you had better say good things, or remain silent."(185)

5. One should practice self-retreat often in order to have time for reflection on one's deeds to see if they are pleasing to Allah (عز وجل) or not. This will provide opportunities for early repentance and change of direction towards a good life in this world and the Hereafter.

6. The Muslim should exert considerable effort to accustom himself to staying up parts of the night for prayers and remembrance of Allah (عز وجل). This will bring about in his heart a sweet feeling of faith, stimulating further responses or similar acts of worship during the night. These, in turn, will lead to the recurrence of

that feeling and spiritual joy.

7. When in *i'tikaaf*, the Muslim should be fully aware of what it means to love Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) and be his follower. This will provide good opportunities to maintain such awareness and fulfill its requirements once retreat is over.

14. Voluntary Night Prayers in Ramadan(186)

Offering voluntary salaah during the night is considered a sign of faith. Describing the faithful, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says, "(16) Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of what we have bestowed on them." [32/16] Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If one stays up the nights of Ramadan (praying and doing acts of remembrance) for the sake of Allah, one's past sins will be forgiven." (187) About how to perform the voluntary prayers during the night, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The night prayers are to be performed in sets of two *rak'as*, one after the

other. Then, they are to be concluded with one *rak'ah*, before the break of dawn." [188] Encouraging fellow Muslims to offer voluntary prayers during the night, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "The best prayers other than obligatory ones are those offered in the middle of the night."[189] Describing how the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, 'Aisha said, "The Prophet would pray 11 rakh'as during the night, in Ramadan as well as in other months. He would pray a 4-*rak'ah* set first. You can't imagine how well performed and how long they were! Then, he would pray another 4-*rak'ah* set. You can't imagine how well performed and how long they were! He would conclude with a 3-*rak'ah* set...."[190]

Regarding *salaah* during the night, the Prophet (ﷺ) would typically prolong Qur'anic recitation when physically endurable. He would also offer it regularly. In fact, the Prophet (ﷺ) commends the acts of worship that are done on a regular basis.[191]

Six Questions Related to *Salaah* during the Night

There are six questions that need to be answered with respect to *salaah* during the night. Three of them are related to these Ayahs: "(16) Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of what we have bestowed on them. (17) No soul knows what is kept hid for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do." [32/16-17]

Related Question 1

How do they forsake their beds?

Answer 2

Forsaking beds involves abandoning sleep and its comfort, and simultaneously spending the night in payers and remembrance of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). It may also mean staying up awaiting the last obligatory *salaah,* especially in congregation. One can also stay awake waiting for the break of dawn so as to offer the first obligatory salaah in congregation on time.(192)

Related Question 2

What about *fear* and *hope*, and how is prayer related to spending?

Answer 2

Fear is from punishment by Allah (ﷻ). Hope is for reward from Allah (ﷻ). Spending in this Ayah combines obligations such as *zakaah* and voluntary acts such as night prayers. The model to follow with regard to all such matters is Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ), as was well expressed in verse by Abdullah Ibn Rawaahah.(193)

Related Question 3

What is the joy kept hidden?

Answer 3

It is the reward Allah (ﷻ) has allocated to those who stay up the night in worship and remembrance of Him. Their reward is eternal bliss and pleasure that no human mind can imagine. They offer prayers in secret during the

night, and so Allah (ﷻ) keeps their reward hidden, as a big surprise for them. According to the Hadith, Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) says, "Allah says: I have prepared for My righteous slaves rewards that eyes have never seen and minds can never imagine."[194]

Related Question 4

What is meant by "The night prayers are to be performed in sets of two *rak'as*" in the afore-mentioned Hadith?

Answer 4

As explained by the narrator, Ibn Omar, the Hadith means what it says, i.e. exiting salaah after completing each 2 rak'ahs.[195]Even though there is more evidence in support of the 2-rak'ah sets, and related Hadiths are more frequently quoted, the 4-rak'ah sets are well established, as mentioned earlier in the Hadith by 'Aisha. Obviously, the 2-rak'ah sets provide more ease, rest and room for urgent matters.[196]

Related Question 5

What about the *taraaweeh salaah* in Ramadan? Which style is to be followed: the 2-rak'ah sets or the 4-rak'ah sets? Which is better: to perform it in congregation or individually?

Answer 5

The *taraaweeh salaah* in Ramadan falls into the category of voluntary night prayers. With respect to *taraaweeh,* tow incidents are relevant. The first is about the Prophet (ﷺ), and the second is about Omar Ibn al-Khattaab.

According to the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to the mosque in the middle of the night for voluntary *salaah*. Some Muslims joined him in congregation, as their imam. The Prophet (ﷺ) did the same the following day, but the congregation was larger as the news had spread. On the third night, the congregation was much larger. On the fourth night the mosque was too crowded with people, but the Prophet (ﷺ) did not

show up. He showed up only for the dawn prayer. Having finished the dawn prayer, he addressed the congregation, explaining to them why he did not show up on the fourth night; he became worried lest it would become obligatory and they would not be able to fulfill the obligation. As mentioned by Ibn Shihaab,(197) the night *salaah* remained that way during the Prophet's life, Abu-Bakr's era and part of Omar's caliphate.(198)

As for the second incident, Omar Ibn Al-Khattaab went to the mosque on a Ramadan night. There, he saw some people praying individually, while others in congregation, behind an imam. He thought it would be ideal for all to follow one imam. He gathered them in one congregation with Obayy Ibn Kaab as their imam. Seeing the people in the mosque praying in one congregation led by one imam, omar was very pleased with the new arrangement of voluntary night salaah, particularly as the prayers were offered during the latter part of

the night, a much better time and more opportune than the earlier part.[(199)]

From the afore-mentioned incidents, some conclusions can be made:[(200)]

- The Prophet (ﷺ) approved of the action of those who joined him in congregational prayers. During the three nights.
- His decision not to show up on the fourth night was out of mercy for Muslims.
- By the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), *taraaweeh salaah* remained voluntary. However, Omar saw it commendable to have one congregation for all, following one imam in the mosque. This step has significant implications, such as:
    - Muslims are to follow the Prophet's guidance with respect to voluntary congregational prayers during the night.
    - Omar was well aware of the Prophet's worry about how the regular performance of

voluntary night *salaah* in congregation might lead to its becoming obligatory.

Such an obligation was going to be too much for Muslims to endure and fulfill. So, what the Prophet (ﷺ) did was motivated by mercy for Muslims.

- Omar had in mind the unity of Muslims in prayer. Apparently, praying individually was a sign of disunity, whereas following one imam in congregation was conducive to unity, particularly in the case of a competent imam, who was able to recite nicely and effectively.

Thus, it can be safely concluded that Muslims should perform the *taraaweeh salaah* in congregation. Omar did so, and the other companions followed suit, and so did the Muslims afterwards.

Furthermore, Omar highlighted the

significance of congregational *salaah* in the last third of the night. At this time, as the Hadith maintains, Allah (ﷻ) calls on Muslims to ask Him for blessings and forgiveness, promising to answer their prayers.(201)

Related Question 6

Is there a fixed number of *rak'as* for the *taraweeh salaah*?

Answer 6

As mentioned earlier in the Hadith related by A'isha, the Prophet (ﷺ) would not perform more eleven *raka'hs* for the voluntary night *salaah,* be it in Ramadan or any other month.(202)In another Hadith, she said, "[During the night, he offered] seven *rak'ahs*, nine *rak'ahs* or eleven *rak'ahs*, exluding the dawn voluntary prayer."(203) She also said, "During the night, the Prophet would offer thirteen *rak'ahs*, including the witr (single *rak'ah*) and the dawn's voluntary two-*rak'ah* prayer."(204)

Commenting on the Hadiths related by 'Aisha regarding the voluntary night *salaah,* Imam Ibn Hajar mentioned how the Hadiths seemed confusing to some people. Clearing the misunderstanding, he says that they involve various times and conditions. The thirteen rak'ahs mentioned in one Hadith include the dawn's voluntary two-rak'ah prayer.(205)

To conclude the argument on the number of rak'ahs of the voluntary night *salaah*, it is clear that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to offer eleven as maximum.(206) However, the Salaf's understanding and practice imply flexibility, i.e. there is room for increase. That the Prophet (ﷺ) says that the night's voluntary *salaah* is in two-rak'ah sets(207) does not impose a limit on the number of rak'ahs, but shows their combination.

Regarding the term *qiyaam Ramadan* (staying up during the night in Ramadan), it is said to refer to the *taraaweeh salaah*. By performing this

salaah, *qiyaam* is realized. However, *qiyaam* is not limited to the *taraaweeh salaah*. Even the *taraaweeh* or *qiyaam salaah* is not limited to eleven *rak'ahs*; one may decide to offer only two or offer more than eleven. Either offer falls within the broad category of *taraaweeh*.

Wallaahu a'lam (The whole truth is with Allah alone).

15. Observing Lailat Alqadr

Lailat Alqadr (the Night of Power / of Decree) has a special status as mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Qur'an says:

- "(185) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)." [2/185]

- "(1) Ha. Mim. (2) By the Scripture that makes plain. (3) Lo! We revealed it on a blessed night.

Lo! We are ever warning. (4) Whereupon every wise command is made clear (5) As a command from Our presence. Lo! We are ever sending." [44/1-5]

- "(1) Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power. (2) Ah, what will convey unto you what the Night of Power is! (3) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. (4) The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees. (5) (That night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn." [97/1-5]

In the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) sys:

"If one stays up the nights of Ramadan (praying and doing acts of remembrance) for the sake of Allah, one's past sins will be forgiven."(208)

- "Once the ten days started, he would intensify worship in seclusion, stay up the night (in worship) and wake his wives up (for the same purpose)."(209)

- "Seek Lailat Al-Qadr in the odd-numbered nights of the last ten days of Ramadan."(210)
- "... Seek it on the fifth, seventh or ninth night (of the last ten days of Ramadan)."(211)

Teaching 'Aisha what prayers to say on Lailat Al-Qadr, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Say: O Allah, You are Forgiving and Generous, and You love to forgive. Forgive my sins."(212)

Relevant Points about Lailat Al-qadr

In the light of the above - mentioned Ayahs and Hadiths about Lailat Alqadr, there are some relevant points worth mentioning. The points are presented below:

(1) Implications of the Qur'anic Ayahs on Lailat Alqadr

The above-mentioned statements form the Qur'an as well as the Sunnah affirm Lailat Alqadr as a special night in Ramadan. On this night, the Qur'an was sent down as a whole to our universe, Afterwards, it was revealed unto

Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) part by part on relevant occasions. According to the Hadith, "On the blessed night of Alqadr, in Ramadan, the whole year's list of worldly affairs is passed on from the Preserved Tablet to the angels in charge of records. The list contains all the details of the year's occurrences, including distribution of livelihoods and lives to end, etc. All the occurrences are final, non-changeable. They are divinely decreed. Allah (ﷻ) says, "(5) As a command from Our presence....." [44/5] It is all with His Permission, Command and Knowledge.(213)

(2) Occasion of Surat Al-Qadr Revelation

There are various explanations for the occasion of the revelation of Surat Al-Qadr.(214)This is one that has been cited often. "As told by the Prophet, a man from Jacob's descendents fought for the cause of Allah for a thousand months. On hearing this, fellow

Muslims were amazed. So, the Prophet (ﷺ) received this revelation: ’(1) Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power. (2) Ah, what will convey unto you what the Night of Power is! (3) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months....’[91/1-3] Thus, the pure acts of worship done one Lailat Alqadr are better than *jihad* for a thousand months." In another version of this explanation, the man did acts of worship during the night and fought the enemy during the day, and kept doing so for a thousand months.(215)

(3) Meaning and Implications of Al-Qadr

(A) Meaning(216)(217)(218)

The Arabic word *alqadr* has a variety of meanings. It refers to such qualities as the extent, amount, value, sanctity or prestige of something. It can also refer to Allah’s design, laws and destiny of things, matters and His creation in general; in this sense, *Al-Qadr* is

synonymous with the Arabic word *Al-Qadar*.

(B) Implications[219]

In Qur'anic literature the word *Al-Qadr* in the phrase Lailat Al-Qadr has mainly three meanings:

- It may be synonymous with the Arabic word *Al-Qadar*, i.e. Divine Destiny. Hence, on Lailat Al-Qadr, the year's affairs of all creatures, recorded in the Tablet, are revealed by Allah (عزّ وجلّ) to the angels in charge. This implies that Allah (عزّ وجلّ) knows those affairs before they take place and that they occur in accordance with His laws. This meaning is obvious in the two following Ayahs: "Whereupon (on that night) every wise command is made clear. "[44/4] "The angels and the Spirit descend therein (on that night), by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees."[97/4]
- It may mean "magnificent status", and hence,

the Night's significance in relation to the following: the revelation of the Qur'an was on it; the great status of the Messenger (ﷺ) unto whom the Qurán was revealed; the honor bestowed on the nation to which the Messenger (ﷺ) was sent; the blessings, mercy and forgiveness Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) grants on it; the descent of angels on it with all decrees; the great rewards promised to those who spent the Night in worship and remembrance; and the high status given to them by Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).

- It may imply restriction as well, in the sense that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) has not specified the exact Night. The sense of restriction may refer to the presence of so many angels on it that there is hardly a space left.
- There is the view that the Arabic word *Al-Qadr* in the phrase *Lailat Al-Qadr* differs from *Al-Qadar*. Whereas the latter refers to Divine Destiny, the former refers to the account of

what is destined and revealed to angels in minute details for the year in hand.(220)

(4) Virtues of Lailat Al-Qadr(221)

In Surat Al-Qadr, Allah (ﷻ) states that Lailat Al-Qadr is such a magnificent night that its status is beyond comprehension: "(2) Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is!"[97/2] Then, He mentions its virtues. These include the following:

(A) Worship on Lailat Al-Qadr is worth more than that in a thousand months, i.e. eighty-three years and four months: "(3) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months."[97/3] This shows how merciful and generous to people Allah (ﷻ) is.

(B) During *Lailat Al-Qadr,* angels are busy with assignments of mercy and blessings. They attend assemblies of remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) and Qránic recitations, done by the

faithful in abundance. Angel Jibreel's (Gabriel's) descent is a sign of the great status of the Night.

(C) During *Lailat Al-Qadr*, angels keep praying for those engaged in acts of worship, seeking to please Allah (ﷻ).

(D) Lailat Al-Qadr is a night for good, not evil. During it, Satan's usual evil is restrained.

(E) As mentioned earlier, on *Lailat Al-Qadr*, the year's affairs of all creatures are revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to the angels in charge.

(F) It was on *Lailat Al-Qadr* that the whole Qurán was sent down from the Preserved Tablet to the House of Honor, in the nearest heaven to earth. From there, the Qurán was revealed unto Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) part by part over a period of twenty-three years.

(5) The Special Rewards of Lailat Al-Qadr

The followers of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ)

have been blessed with multiple rewards from Allah (ﷻ) for small deeds. That *Lailat Al-Qadr*'s reward is better than one thousand nights provides a good example. According to the Hadith, Allah (ﷻ) bestows His blessings unto whomever He wishes, yet He is never unjust to any.[222]

The view that Lailat Al-Qadr's special reward is for the followers of Mohammad (ﷺ) is held by such scholars as Imam Malik, Ibn Hajar, Al-Nawawi and Al-Siyooti.[223]However, Ibn Katheer maintains that Lailat Al-Qadr's special reward applied to earlier nations as well.[224] Evidence is in favor of the former view.

(6) Locating Lailat Al-Qadr

All arguments on locating Lailat Al-Qadr center round this Hadith: "Seek Lailat Al-Qadr in an odd-numbered night in the last ten in Ramadan."[225] There are over forty Hadiths of the *saheeh* (sound) rank related to locating it. Let

us sum up the strongest argument evident in these Hadiths:

1. There is a chapter in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* on seeking Lailat Al-Qadr on an odd-numbered night in the last ten days of Ramadan. In the light of this chapter, Ibn Hajar concludes that it is in Ramadan, it is in the last ten days, and it is on an odd-numbered night.(226) He mentions the possibility of its being the night of the twenty-fifth of Ramadan, a view advocated by Abu Thawr, Al-Muzani and Ibn Khuzaimah(227) as well as others.(228)Ibn Hajar puts forward forty-eight related statements, in favor of its being an odd-numbered night in the last ten days.(229)

2. According to Imam Alnawawi, "Lailat Al-Qadr shifts within the last ten days of Ramadan, thus accommodating varied sound relevant Hadiths."(230)

3. Ibn Taymiyah says the following: "Lailat Al-

Qadr is within the last ten days of Ramadan. It is well established that the Prophet (ﷺ) says, 'It is in the last ten days of Ramadan, and in the odd ones in particular.'"[231]

4. There is a Salafi opinion derived from the Hanbali and the Hanafi schools of thought, arguing that Lailat Al-Qadr is on the twenty-seventh of Ramadan.[232]This is based on Obayy Ibn Kaab's statement: "By Allah - there is no God but He - by Allah, I know which night it is. It is the night which the Messenger of Allah instructed us to observe. It is marked by clear sunrise in the morning that follows.[233]Defending this opinion, some argue that the related Ayah number (27) speaks for itself.[234] Only Allah knows the truth.

5. Having mentioned related views, Al-Shinqeeti reaches this conclusion: Considering the arguments for identifying Lailat Al-Qadr to

be an odd-numbered one in the last ten of Ramadan, the night of the twenty-seventh is the highly likely candidate according to the majority of ulama. This conclusion is supported by evidence, and it is reiterated by followers of Ibn Hanbal. As mentioned by Al-Qastalaani[235], two Hadiths are used in support of the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadan. One in Sahih Muslim is narrated by Obayy Ibn Kaab. The other in *Musnad Ahmad* is narrated by Ibn Omar. The same conclusion is reached by Al-Shaashi, a follower of the Shaafi'iy school of thought.[236]

In one Hadith, Ibn Abbass reported that an old man told the Prophet (ﷺ) it was too difficult for him to stay up the Ramadan nights seeking *Lailat Al-Qadr*. The old man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) for a night which he could stay up in worship, and it could be Lailat Al-Qadr. The Prophet (ﷺ) told him to concentrate on the twenty-

seventh.[237]

Summing up the argument regarding the location of Lailat Al-Qadr, it can be safely concluded that **it** is an odd-numbered night in the last ten days of Ramadan[238], and it is highly likely on the twenty-seventh. *Wa-llaahu a'lam* (the whole truth is with Allah).

(7) Signs of Lailat Al-Qadr

Lailat Al-Qadr is believed to have certain signs. Some are general, i.e. can be identified by all. Others are special, i.e. experienced by particular individuals. The following are general signs:

1. In the morning following it, the sun rises with distinct clarity and roundness, but without disturbing rays. One can look at it as if looking at a bright full moon.
2. On that night, the moon appears like half a big bowl.

3. The night is quiet, with nothing disturbing such as meteorites. The sky is obviously clear and looks well lit by the bright full moon. The night is neither unbearably hot nor cold.

The above-mentioned sings are derived from the following Hadiths:

1. Zirr Ibn Hubaish asked Obayy Ibn Kaab, "... How do you know that Lailat Al-Qadr is that of the twenty-seventh?" Obayy answered, "By the sign which the Prophet mentioned to us, i.e., the sun rises on the day that follows it without rays."(239)
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It is marked by a sun rising clear, without the usual rays. The sun is like the crescent...."(240)
3. Once, in the Prophet's presence, some companions were speaking about *Lailat Al-Qadr* when he said, "Did you see the moon rise like half a bowl?"(241)
4. According to another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ)

said, "The signs of Lailat Al-Qadr are that the sky is clear and bright, with a moon bright shining. It is neither unbearably hot nor cold. No meteorites appear till the night is over.(242)

(8) The Prophet's Knowledge of Lailat Al-Qadr

Explaining Ayah No. 2 of Surat Al-Qadr, Ibn Oyaynah concludes that the Prophet (ﷺ) was told when it is.(243) This is how Ibn Hajar understands Ibn Oyaynah's explanation.(244)

According to one Hadith,(245) the Prophet (ﷺ) was out to tell fellow Muslims about the time of Lailat Al-Qadr, when he saw two Muslims fighting. This distracted him, but he recommended that Muslims seek the blessed night on the twenty-ninth, twenty-seventh or twenty-fifth of Ramadan.

In another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "I was shown Lailat Al-Qadr in a dream, but when awakened by some family member, I forgot it.(246) So, you should seek it in the last ten days

of Ramadan."[247]

The aforementioned Hadiths suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) knew when Lailat Al-Qadr was. However, on two occasions, he wanted to inform fellow Muslims about it, but he was distracted.[248]

A Lesson to Learn

The Prophet (ﷺ) was distracted by a fight between two from informing fellow Muslims about the time of Lailat Al-Qadr. Each one insisted he was right. This raises the issue of fighting and disputes among fellow Muslims, especially scholars. Such disputes may lead to loss of good things and to punishment.[249] It is not beneficial to try to win an argument at all costs. This is meant to achieve a personal victory rather than establishing the truth. Therefore, Muslims are advised to avoid unnecessary disputes at the academic level, and not to disturb or distract Muslim scholars from urgent issues.

(9) The Wisdom Underlying Unspecific Date for Lailat Al-Qadr

According to the Hadith, distracted by a dispute between two, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that perhaps it was good that the night was not specified.(250) The absence of a definite night motivates Muslims to observe the whole month or at least the last ten days in earnest worship.(251)In other words, it is more beneficial not to know the exact night, otherwise one would concentrate on one particular night at the expense of all other nights. Even the last ten days would receive less attention from worshippers. The I'tikaaf (retreat) typical of the last ten days would not be observed - the Prophet (ﷺ) used to observe *i'tikaaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan. And so did his wives after his death.(252) According to the Hadith, "Once the ten days started, he would intensify worship in seclusion, stay up the night (in worship) and wake his wives up (for the same purpose)."(253)(254)

(10) Lailat Al-Qadr Not Cancelled

The afore-mentioned Hadith regarding the dispute between two Muslims, causing the Prophet (ﷺ) not to inform fellow Muslims about the exact date of Lailat Al-Qadr, may be understood as cancellation of the night altogether. Al-Bukhari explains that the Hadith meant the cancellation of information on the night's exact date, not the night itself.(255)This is obvious in the rest of the Hadith, as the Prophet (ﷺ) continues, "... Seek it on the twenty-ninth, twenty-seventh or twenty-fifth of Ramadan."(256)Also, in another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) instructs Muslims to seek the blessed night on the odd-numbered days of Ramadan.(257)How can the night itself be cancelled while the Prophet (ﷺ) instructs Muslims later to seek it?!(258)Evidently, the reference to cancellation meant the information, not the real night.(259)If it meant the cancellation of the night itself, there would be no command to

seek it al all. Related Hadiths and actual occurrence of signs affirm the continuation of Lailat Al-Qadr.[260] This will continue till the Resurrection Day, by the Grace of Allah (ﷻ), as a favor from Him to the followers of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ).

(11) Experiencing Lailat Al-Qadr

As related by Abu Saeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I saw myself prostrating in water and mud." Abu Saeed continued, "The sky started pouring that night,[261] and as a result, water went through the roof of the Prophet's mosque[262] on the night of the twenty-first. I saw the Prophet leaving the mosque in the morning, and his face was stained with mud and water."[263]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "As you dreamt of the night was in the last ten days (of Ramadan), then seek it in the odd-numbered nights therein."[264]

In another Hadith, some Muslims dreamt that

Lailat Al-Qadr was in the last seven. Commenting on this, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "As you dreamt of it to be in the last seven, then seek it in the last seven."(265) The two sets of days (last ten / seven) for seeking Lailat AL-Qadr are mentioned in this Hadith: "Seek it in the last ten. However, if one is unable or weak, one should not miss seeking it in the last seven."(266)

The following can be inferred from this section:

1. Lailat Al-Qadr can be experienced in a dream which materializes later, as in the case of the Prophet (ﷺ) when he dreamt he was prostrating in mud and water. This dream came true.
2. Visions are taken into consideration in the case of referring to an existential matter that does not contradict an Islamic principle. For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed that the men's vision of Lailat Al-Qadr was consistent

with his instruction to seek it in the last ten days of Ramadan. His instruction was not based on their vision, for the night is already located in the last ten, even if they had not had the vision. The same logic applies to such cases as the call for prayer.[267]

3. It is Islamically acceptable that Lailat Al-Qadr can be experienced in a dream. Some companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had such experiences.

Related Question 1

Is there a sign marking experiencing Lailat Al-Qadr by someone awake?[268]

Answer 1

There are varied views in this regard. There are views that suggest seeing or hearing signs. For example, it is said that one may see all things in a prostrating position. One may see bright lights shining everywhere, even in dark places. It is also said that one may hear angels greeting with peace

or speaking. A further sign is said to be the answer of the prayers of whoever experiences Lailat Al-Qadr.

However, Al-Tabari maintains that none of the above signs are necessary. One does not have to see or hear anything to be experiencing Lailat Al-Qadr.[(269)] As for Annawawi, he maintains that the Night exists, and it can be seen and realized by as many as Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) wishes every Ramadan. This is verified by the Hadith and by the numerous reports given by trustworthy Muslim individuals.[(270)]

This view is favored by the author. It is possible for whomever Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) wishes to experience Lailat Al-Qadr by miraculous signs while fully awake. However no such signs are really necessary for it to happen. The Lailah occurs, be it during sleep or in a wide awake state.

Wallaahu a'lam.

The whole truth is only with Allah.

Related Question 2

What prayers are recommended to be said on Lailat Al-Qadr?

Answer 2

It is recommended that the Muslim supplicate Allah (ﷻ) as much as possible at all times. The Month of Ramadan, especially the last ten, is a great opportunity for more supplication. The odd-numbered nights, which include Lailat Al-Qadr, are regarded as the most opportune times for supplication. As recommended by the Hadith, the Muslim is to ask Allah (ﷻ), saying, "O Allah (ﷻ), You are Forgiving, and You love to forgive. So, forgive me."(271)The Prophet (ﷺ)'s instruction to supplicate Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness is a consistent conclusion with the perseverance in worship during Ramadan, especially the last ten days. It is a wonderful experience to do one's best regardless of seeing or awaiting material results.(272)

Related Question 3

Is the reward assigned to acts of worship on Lailat Al-Qadr to be given to whoever observes it, regardless of knowing whether it is the real night or not?

Answer 3

In the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "If one faithfully observes Lailat Al-Qadr seeking reward from Allah, one's past sins will be forgiven."(273) In a similar Hadith, he says, "If one faithfully observes Lailat Al-Qadr seeking reward from Allah, and it happens to be the real night, one is granted forgiveness."(274) He also says, "If faithfully observing Lailat Al-Qadr seeking reward from Allah, one is given the fortune to experience it, one's past and future sins will be forgiven."(275)

The above-mentioned Hadiths imply a variety of states regarding observance of Lailat Al-Qadr. There are those who observe the nights

recommended in the Hadith, hoping for the promised reward. Some may be fortunate enough to see signs of it in vision or in reality. Others may not see any signs or even realize which one it is. According to Annawawi and Ibn Hajar, one can be guided to realize a particular night is Lailat Al-Qadr, without necessarily seeing extraordinary signs. In such a case, one gets the promised reward. This does not deny the reward to whomever stays up the night in worship seeking Lailat Al-Qadr not knowing when it is or being shown any signs of it. What matters in all states of Lailat Al-Qadr is spending the night on acts of worship for the sake of pleasing Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). However, it does not necessarily follow that if one sees signs, though miraculous, one will observe the night in worship or get the reward. The whole truth is with Allah alone.[276]

Thus, three possibilities can be identified: one faithfully observes Lailat Al-Qadr without knowing it is the night or not, and in this case

one is well rewarded; knowing it by non-miraculous signs, one realizes it is the night, and in this case, one is forgiven all sins; and one that is faithfully observing it, and seeking reward from Allah (ﷻ), is granted experiencing the sought night - in this case, one is well rewarded and is given the appointed reward, by having all sins forgiven in addition to the privilege of experiencing the night in vision or reality. Allah (ﷻ) grants blessings to whomever He wills.

16. Zakaat / Sadaqat Al-Fitr

It is a blessing from Allah (ﷻ) to be given the opportunity to follow one's fasting by an act of *zakaah* to be given to the poor and needy. This has purifying effects and it a perfect note with which fasting ends. It is also a reward to the poor, thus contributing to the spread of love and charity. Though little, *zakaat al-fitr* has great significance for all.

The name *zakaat al-fitr* derives from the

prescription of *zakkah* in association with breaking the Ramadan fast.[277]This zakaah was prescribed in the second year of Hijrah (the Prophet's migration from Makkah to Medina), the same year fasting was prescribed. It is obligatory for each Muslim that has some extra earnings above what his family needs on the Eed day and night. It has to be paid on behalf of dependents, poor servants included, by their parents or guardians who can afford it. The amount of zakaat al-fitr per person is equal to 2700 grams[278] of the average food in the place in question. At his time, the Prophet (ﷺ) defined four types of food: dates, barley,[279]*iqt*[280] and raisins. As for the time zakaat al-fitr is due, the Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the time from the dawn prayer to a little before leaving for the Eed prayer. It can be paid a day or two before Eed, but delay beyond the Eed prayer is not advisable because of missing the opportunity and the aim of making the poor happy that day.

Let us conclude the *zakaat al-fitr* section by

reiterating the following:

1. "The Messenger of Allah prescribed *zakaat al-fitr* in order to purify our fast of possible sins such as vain arguments and obscenities, and to feed the needy."(281)
2. "As prescribed by the Messenger of Allah, *zakaat al-fitr* is a *saa'* (about 2700 grams) of dates or barley on each Muslim, be it salve / free, male / female or young / old. He instructed that it be given (to the deserving recipients) till the time people are ready to leave their homes for the Eed prayer."(282)
3. As narrated by Saeed Al-Khudri, "*Zakaat al-fitr* we used to give out was a *saa'* of food, barley, dates, *iqt* or raisins."(283)

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Conclusion

The following quotation from Ibn Al-Qayyim is a worthy conclusion of this book. "Fasting is meant to restrain the appetitive dimension of self, to give it a break from routine and to moderate the animalistic instincts. This energizes the quest of self for maximum happiness and bliss and for higher aspirations towards eternity. By experiencing hunger and thirst, self is subdued and is reminded of the sufferings of the needy. Also, there will be no easy access for Satan. Physical power will not be left to follow its usual course which involves harm to survival in this world and the Hereafter. Fasting subjugates each organ and puts it under the control and protection of piety. It represents an exercise for the good and those close to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). Of all human deeds, fasting is purely for the Lord of the Worlds. By fasting, the Muslim does not act, but

abstains from acts of sexual intercourse, eating and drinking for the sake of the Lord. In other words, the Muslim denies himself the pleasures of life in order to please Allah (ﷻ). None but Allah (ﷻ) knows for sure whether he is actually fasting or not and this makes fasting a special act of worship.

As for its effects, fasting plays an important role in protecting the outer parts and the inner powers of the body. It involves a halt to the intake of harmful elements while discharging others that are a hazard to health. By so doing, fasting enhances the health of body and soul, and it regains what is lost for the appetitive instincts. Thus, it is a great help towards achieving piety. As stated in the Qur'an, "(183) O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may achieve *taqwa*." [2/183] In the Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "Fasting if protection."(284)

He recommended voluntary fasting as a protective way of controlling sexual desires to those who cannot afford the costs of marriage and married life.[(285)]

In its entirety, fasting is prescribed as a source of mercy, kindness and protection for people. It is indeed part of the message delivered by the Messenger of Allah, whose guidance is perfect, is the most fruitful and the simplest for all."[(286)]

This concludes my humble effort towards this treatise on fasting. Any shortcomings are my responsibility. Comments meant to correct errors or to improve the book will be very much appreciated. Done for the sake of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), they will be rewarded. May Allah make my intentions pure and reward me for the effort. May He extend the reward to my parents and to fellow believers. May He make me a means to good.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon

Prophet Mohammad , his companions and all his followers.

May all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

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Endnotes

(1) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 7492 and No. 1894.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1151.

(2) *Lisaan Al-Arab,* an Arabic-Arabic dictionary, p. 4/2529.
Alqaamuus Al-Muheet, an Arabic-Arabic dictionary, p. 1460.

(3) The Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs: *Al-Mawsuu'ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, in Arabic, Kuwait, p. 28/7.

(4) Abul-'ula, Mohammad Mustafa: *Nuur Al-Eemaan (Light of Faith)*, in Arabic, p.1/1261.

(5) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1128.

(6) *Sunan Abi-Daawuud,* Hadith No. 507.
Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 5/246.

(7) The Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs: *Al-Mawsuu'ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, in Arabic, Kuwait, p. 28/93.

(8) *Sunan Attermidhiy*, Hadith No. 761.

(9) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1178.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 721.

(10) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1892.

(11) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1892.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1126.

(12) *Sahih al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1949.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1145.

(13) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1915.

(14) *Sunan Abi-Daawuud,* Hadith No. 506.
Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 3/460.

(15) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 1915.

(16) *Tafsseer Al-Tabari,* explanation of Ayah No. 187, in Surat Al-Baqarah.

(17) Abul-'ula, Mohammad Mustafa: *Nuur Al-Eemaan,* p. 1/267.

(18) *Sahih Muslim,* Hadith No. 1916.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1090.

(19) *Sahih Muslim,* Hadith No. 621.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1093.

(20) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 623.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1092.

(21) *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Hadith No. 2003.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1129.

(22) See Endnote11.

(23) *Sahih Muslim,* Hadith No. 1134.

(24) Ibid.

(25) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 16.
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 28 - fasting comes after *hajj*.

(26) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 38.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 760.

(27) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 37.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 759.

(28) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 35.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 760.

(29) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 7492 and No. 1894.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1151.

(30) Ibid.

(31) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1905.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1400.

(32) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1894.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1151.

(33) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1903 .

(34) *Sunan Attermidhiyy,* Hadith No. 3519.
Sunan Ibn Maajah, Hadith No. 1745.

(35) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1896.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1152.

(36) See Footnote No. 1.

(37) Ibid.

(38) *Sunan Ibn Maajah,* Hadith No. 1753.

(39) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1902.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2308.

(40) *Tafseer Ibn Katheer,* p. 1858.

(41) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 813.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1167..

(42) *Sunan Attermidhiyy,* Hadith No. 682.

(43) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1976.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1159.

(44) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1981.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 721.
(45) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 722.
(46) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1162.
(47) *Sunan Abi Daawwuud*, Hadith No. 2436.
(48) *Sunan Attermidhyi,* Hadith No. 747.
(49) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1969.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1154.
(50) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1164.
(51) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1162.
(52) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1162.
(53) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2004.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1130.
(54) Please see Endnote No. 23.
(55) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1983.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1161.
(56) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2840.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1153.
(57) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1985.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1144.
(58) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1144.
(59) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 2421.
Sunan Attermidhiy, Hadith No. 744.
(60) See *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, in Arabic, 28/15.
(61) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 1989.
Sunan Attermidhiy, Hadith No. 1124.

(62) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 751.

(63) Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah: Islamic Jurisprudence: Evidence, p. 2/579.

(64) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1907.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1080.

(65) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 2334.
Sunan Attermidhiy, Hadith No. 686.
*Sunan Annasaa'iy, H*adith No. 2498.
Sunan Ibn Maajah, Hadith No. 1645.

(66) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1914.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1082.

(67) Nairuuz is a Persian celebration, meaning Spring Day, on the 4th day of spring. Marajaan is another Persian celebration, on the 19th day of the fall /autumn.

(68) See Ibn Qudaamah's *Al-Mughni,* in Arabic, p. 2/99; Al-Buhuuti's *Arrawdh Al-Murbi' Sharh Zaad Al-Mustanqi'*, in Arabic, p. 1/146; and Ibn Aabideen's *Radd Al-Mihtaar li Ibn Aabideen*, in Arabic, p. 2/85.

(69) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 7241.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1104.
For more regarding continuing the fast, you may consult the following Hadiths: *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1963; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1964; Fat-hul Baari, Hadith No. 4/244.

(70) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1977.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1159.

(71) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1162.

(72) They are the 11th, 12th and 13th of the Arabic month of Dhul-Hijjah.

(73) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1991.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 827.

(74) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1141.

(75) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 17514.

(76) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 1997 and No. 1998.

(77) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1999.

(78) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 1951 and No. 304.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 80.

(79) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 321.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 335.

(80) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1950.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1146.

(81) This is from a fatwa by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jibreen, in *Fataawaa Al-Siyaam (Fatwas on Fasting)*, in Arabic, compiled by Ahmad Al-Mideifer, p. 72.

(82) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 5195.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1026.
See Al-Qurtubi's Sharh *Sahih Muslim (Explanation of Sahih Al-Bukhari)*, in Arabic, 4/1727.

(83) See Ibn Katheer's *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-'Azheem* (*Explaining the Great Qur'an),* in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 200.

(84) *Muwatta' Maalik*, Hadith No. 2/745.

Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 2867.

Sunan Ibn Maajah, Hadith No. 2341.

See, Mohamed Fouad's Commentary on *Muwatta' Al-Imaam Maalik,* 2/745.

(85) See Endnote No. 65.

(86) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1913.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1080.

(87) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 2342.

(88) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1909.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1081.

(89) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1087.

(90) See Al-Shawkaani's Nail Al-Awtaar, in Arabic, 4/194.

(91) Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah: *Al-Fiqh Al-Islaami wa Adillatuh (Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences)*, in Arabic, 2/610, quoted from a paper by Sheikh Mohammad Al-Saayis, Mujamma Albuhuuth Al-Islamiyyah third conference proceedings, p. 99.

(92) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 687

See Ibn Abi Hatim's *Al-Ilal*, 670.

(93) See Endnote No. 67.

(94) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 121.

(95) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 4/199 and Hadith No. 4/204.

(96) *Sunan Annassaaey,* Hadith No. 3462.

Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 6/101 and Hadith No. 1/118.

(97) See Endnote No. 95.

(98) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 2454

(99) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1154.

(100) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1926.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1109.

(101) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1936.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1111.

(102) This endnote is related to an Arabic word in the original. The word is bidnah, meaning a camel or cow which is well-fed before sacrifice - the plural form is budn.

(103) See *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-Azheem (Explanation of the Great Qur'an)*, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 576.

(104) See *Al-Mawsooah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, in Arabic, No. 28/60.
Al-Mirdaawi's *Al-Inssaaf*, No. 3/313.

(105) See Endnote No. 103.

(106) See Endnote No.84

(107) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 720.

(108) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1937.

(109) *Sunan Ibn Maajah,* Hadith No.1678. This Hadith is judged as "weak" by Al-Bussairy in Al-Misbaah, No. 1/299.

(110) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 726.

(111) For varied views on hijaamah, see:
- *Sahih Al-Bukari,* Hadith No. 1983.
- *Sahih Muslim,* Hadith No. 1202.
- *Sunan Attirmidhiyy,* Hadith No. 774.
- Al-Mirdaawi's *Al-Insaaf,* 3/302.
- Al-Shawkaani's *Nail Al-Awtaar,* 4/203.

(112) See Endnote No. 101.

(113) From *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, No. 28/60.

(114) Ibid, No. 28/44-59.

(115) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1088.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1339.

(116) This is the view of the Maalikis, and the Shaafi'is, whereas the Hanbalis require the intention not stay more than 4 days, and the Hanafis require 15 days.
See *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, No. 28/47.

(117) For more information on shortening *salaah* and licensing the break of fast, see Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah: *Al-Fiqh Al-Islaami wa Adillatuh (Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences)*, 1/142.

(118) See *Al-Mughniy*, in Arabic, and Ibn Qudaamah's *Al-Sharh Al-Kabeer*, in Arabic, No. 3/20.

(119) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 4505.

(120) See *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, No. 28/57.

(121) Ibid.

(122) Al-Haakim's *Al-Mustadrak*, p. 2/198. The Hadith is classified as *sahih* (sound) by Al-Haakim and Al-Zhahabiy.

(123) See Endnote No. 32.

(124) See Endnote No. 33.

(125) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2308.

(126) See Endnote No. 32.

(127) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 807.

(128) The middle of the night in this sentence does not refer to the usual 12 midnight as we know it, but it refers to the middle period between complete sunset and a little before dawn.

(129) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1923.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1095.

(130) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1096.

(131) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 3/44.

(132) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1957.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1098.

(133) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 5/147.

(134) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1921.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1097.

(135) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 623.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1092.

(136) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1919.

(137) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 1920, No. 577.

(138) According to sound Hadiths, the Prophet (ﷺ) bans non-stop fasting or linking the fast of one day with the following. He recommends breaking the fast as soon as the sun sets, and the sooner the better. However, one may wait till suhuur time should one wish to prolong the fast,

yet this is not recommended. For more on this issue, see the following references:

Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 1965 and Hadith No. 1963.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1103.

Tafsseer Ibn Katheer, published by Bait Al-Afkaar Al-Dawliyyah, p. 195.

Sunan Attermidhiy, Hadith No. 699.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1105.

(139) See Endnote No. 132.

(140) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 696.

(141) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1954.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1100.

(142) Ahmad's *Musnad Al-Mukathireen*, Hadith No. 7240.

(143) See Endnote No. 140.

(144) See Endnote No.38.

(145) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadiths No. 2357 and No. 2358.

(146) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2026.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1172.

(147) Endnote in the Arabic original is about a metaphor expressing getting mobilized for serious work.

(148) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2024.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1174.

(149) Hijaamah is already dealt with in an earlier section.

(150) See Al-Buhuutiy's *Kashshaaf Al-Oinaa' 'An Matn Al-Iqnaa'*, in Arabic, p. 2/329.

(151) See *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of*

Jurisprudence), No. 28/68.

(152) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1927.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1106.

(153) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1928.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1106.

(154) *Sunan Abi Daawuud*, Hadith No. 2387.

(155) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 788.

(156) See *Al-Mawsoo'ah Al-Fiqhiyya (Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence)*, No. 28/71.

(157) I'tikaaf / retreat has already been mentioned, but it is detailed here.

(158) See Al-Buhuutiy's *Kashshaaf Al-Oinaa' 'An Matn Al-Iqnaa'*, in Arabic, 1/168.

(159) See Endnote No.146.

(160) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6696.

(161) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2032.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1656.

(162) See Ibn *Hajar's Fat-hulbaari*, 4/317 for the ban on sexual intercourse during i'tikaaf (retreat).

(163) Ibid, p. 4/323.
- Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj,* p. 44.

(164) *Sahih Al-Bukhari* Hadith No. 2023
- *Sahih Muslim* Hadith No. 1173
- *Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari*, 4/325.

(165) See Endnote No.146.

(166) See Endnote No. 164.

(167) *Sahih Al-Bukhari* has a chapter in the Book of I'tikaaf carrying the same actions done by the Prophet (ﷺ): "I'tikaaf and Going Out in the morning of the 20th".

(168) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2040.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1167.

(169) See Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/332.

(170) Ibid, 4/322 for the meaning of i'tikaaf for one day / one night.

(171) See Endnote No. 161.

(172) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2042.

(173) See Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/322.

(174) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2044.

(175) See Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, p. 4/334.

(176) This is based on an answer by Shaikh Ibn Jibreen in *A Dialogue on I'tikaaf*, prepared by Salim Al-Juhani, p. 11.

(177) Now such facilities are available for making *i'tikaaf* easy in the mosque.

(178) See Ibn Katheer's *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-'Azheem (Explaining the Great Qur'an),* in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 196.

(179) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2029.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 297.

(180) "Need" in this context and related Hadiths refers to such things as the 'call of nature'.

(181) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2029.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 297.

(182) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2035.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2175.

(183) *Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 4/8.*
Sunan Abi Daawuud, Hadith No. 1047.

(184) This is investigated by Ibn Al-Qayyim in his Zaad Almi'aad, 1/131.

(185) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6475.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 47.

(186) For more on the name "taraaweeh" *salaah*, see Ibn Hajjar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/294.

(187) See Endnote No. 27.
See also Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/296.

(188) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 990.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 749.

(189) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1163.

(190) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1147.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 738.

(191) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadiths No. 43 and 1315.
Sahih Muslim, Hadiths No. 255, 785 and 782.

(192) See Tafseer Ibn Katheer, in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 1345.

(193) Ibid.

(194) Ibid., p. 1346.
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 4779.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2824.

(195) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 749.

(196) See Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 2/556.

(197) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2009.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 759.

(198) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 924.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 761.

(199) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2010.
See Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/297.

(200) See Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 4/297.

(201) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1145.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 758.

(202) See Endnote No. 190.

(203) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1139.

(204) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1140.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 738.

(205) See Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari, 3/26.

(206) Ibid.

(207) See Endnote No. 190.

(208) See Endnote No. 28.

(209) See Endnotes No. 147 and 148.

(210) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2017.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1169.

(211) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2023.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1167.
See *Ibn Hajar's Fat-hulbaari*, 4/315.

(212) *Sunan Attermidhiy,* Hadith No. 3513.

(213) See Ibn Katheer's *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-'Azheem*

(*Explaining the Great Qur'an),* in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, 188.

(214) *TafseerAl-Tabari,* 30/259.
Tafseer Ibn Katheer, p. 1859.
Al-Waahidi's Asbaab Annuzuul, p. 461.
Assuyuuti's Lubaab Annuquul, p. 327.

(215) *Tafseer Ibn Jareer,* 30/259.

(216) See Ibn Faaris's *Mu'jam Al-Maqaayees,* 2/388.

(217) See Tahaanuuni's Mawsoo'at Kashshaaf Istilaahaat Al-Funuun wa Al-'Uluu, 2/130.1

(218) See Al-Fayyuumi's *Al-Misbaah Al-Muneer*, p. 178.

(219) See Ibn Hajjar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/300.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/298.
Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, 20/130.
Abu Hayyaan's Al-Bahr Al-Muheet, 8/92.

(220) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/301.

(221) *Tafseer Ibn Katheer,* published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 1858.
Ibn Hayyaan's *Tafseer Al-Bahr Al-Muheet,* 8/492.

(222) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 557.

(223) *Muwatta' Maalik*, Hadith No. 1/218.
Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, p. 4/304.
Al-Siyuuti's *Al-Khassaa'iss Al-Kubra*, p. 1/208.

(224) See *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-'Azheem (Explaining the Great Qur'an),* in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, 1860.

(225) See Endnote No. 210.

(226) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/306.

(227) *Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah*, Hadith No. 3/323.

(228) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, p. 4/312.

(229) Ibid., 4/313.

(230) See *Al-Majmuu' - Sharh Al-Muhadhdhab* - No. 6/449

(231) See *Majmuu' Al-Fataawaa, 25/284*.
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 813.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1167.

(232) *Tafseer Ibn Katheer,* published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 1861.

(233) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadiths No. 762 and No. 1169.
Al-Mubaarakfuuri's *Minnat Al-Mun'im fi Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 1/480.

(234) See Abu Hayyaan's *Al-Bahr Al-Muheet*, p. 8/493.

(235) See *Irshaad Al-Saari*, 4/595.

(236) Al-Shinqeeti, Mohamed Ahmad: *Zaad Al-Musilm,* in Arabic, 3/305.

(237) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 1/240.

(238) See Ibn Katheer's *Tafseer Al-Quraan Al-'Azheem (Explaining the Great Qur'an),* in Arabic, published by Bait Al-Afkaar, p. 1862. Ibn Katheer mentions views stressing the importance of all the last ten nights in Ramadan.

(239) See Endnote No. 233.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/360.

(240) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 5/324.
See Al-Haithami's Al-Majma', 3/175.

(241) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1170.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/306.

(242) See Endnote No. 240.
(243) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2014.
(244) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/300.
(245) See Endnote No. 211.
(246) Endnote is related to the Arabic original.
(247) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1166.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/299.
(248) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/315.
Al-Qastalaani's *Al-Irshaad*, 4/594
(249) See Al-Qurtubi's *Al-Mufhim*, 4/1953.
See *Ibn Katheer's Tafseer*, p. 1862.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/304.
(250) See Endnote No. 211.
(251) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/314.
(252) See Endnote No. 146.
(253) See Endnote No. 158.
(254) See *Ibn Katheer's Tafseer*, p. 1862.
(255) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/314.
(256) See Endnote No. 211.
(257) See Endnote No. 210.
(258) Al-Shinqeeti, Mohamed Ahmad: *Zaad Al-Musilm,* in Arabic, 3/202.
(259) See *Ibn Katheer's Tafseer*, p. 1860.
(260) See Al-Qurtubi's *Al-Mufhim*, 4/1952.
(261) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2016.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2761.

(262) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2761.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/301.
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 2016.

(263) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2018.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1167.

(264) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1158.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1165.

(265) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2015.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1165.

(266) *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1165.

(267) See Al-Qurtubi's *Al-Mufhim*, 4/1955

(268) Al-Baihaqiy's *Addalaa'il*, 7/33.
Al-Shinqeeti, Mohamed Ahmad: *Zaad Al-Musilm,* in Arabic, 3/206.

(269) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/313.

(270) See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 8/306.

(271) See *Ibn Katheer's Tafseer*, p. 1862.
Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 6/182.
Sunan Attermidhiy, Hadith No. 3513

(272) Al-Haazimi, Ibraheem: *Sutuu' Al-Fajr bi Fadhaail Lailat Al-Qadr*, p. 179.
Ibn Rajab: *Lataaif Al-Maarif*, p. 219.

(273) See Endnote No. 28.

(274) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 35.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 760.

(275) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 5/318.

(276) Ibn Hajjar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 4/313.
See Annawawi's *Al-Minhaaj*, 6/283.
See Al-Qurtubi's *Al-Mufhim*, 3/1306.

(277) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, p. 3/430.

(278) Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah: *Al-Fiqh Al-Islaami wa Adillatuh (Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences)*, in Arabic, 1/142.

(279) Ibn Hajar's *Fat-hulbaari*, 3/431.

(280) "Iqt / Aqt" is a kind of food made from sour milk.
See Al-Fayyuumi's *Al-Misbaah,* an Arabic-Arabic Dictionary.

(281) *Sunan Abi Daawood*, Hadith No. 1609.
Sunan Ibn Maajah, Hadith No. 1827.
Al-Haakim's *Al-Mustadrak*, No. 1/409
Al-Albaani's *Al-Irwaa'*, 3/232.

(282) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1503.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 984.

(283) *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1506.
Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 985.
A mahram is either her husband or a man whom she is forbidden to marry, e.g. father, brother, son, uncle or grandfather.

(284) See Endnote No. 1.

(285) See Endnote No. 31.

(286) Ibn Al-Qayyim: *Zaad Al-Meeaad fi Hadyy Khair Al-'Ibaad, 2/28*.

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